

**A Description of Assessment Practices in the Teaching of English:
Grade 6 Teachers in Four Cape Town Schools**

Makengo Ndungu

NDNMAK001

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degree of Master of Education

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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation examined teachers' formal assessment practices in the teaching of English in Grade Six, in order to describe and document them, and to establish the match between assessment and the requirements of official policy documents. Three case studies involving six Grade Six teachers and four schools were investigated. The schools included a well-resourced and poorly-resourced school which both taught English as Home Language, and two poorly-resourced schools that taught English as First Additional Language. The question that guided the study was; What are the intentions of and the methods used by Grade Six teachers in assessing English in the case study schools? Assessment scripts were the primary data collected, supplemented by teachers' interviews and schools assessment policy documents.

The results showed that lack of adequate guidance and support and lack of assessment skills compromised the standard of the teachers' assessment. All the schools assessed comprehension and grammar by means of short answer response and objective items. Most of these items adhered to their construction principles. The assessment of comprehension, however, focused mainly on lower order cognitive competency and items failed to distinguish between the different reading purposes. In assessing grammar, emphasis was placed on analysed knowledge. Assessment of vocabulary was not done in both First Additional Language and the well-resourced schools, and was inadequately done in the poorly-resourced home language school. Extended writing and oral were found to be the most difficult aspects to assess. Extended writing was done in three of the four schools and oral work in only two schools. Teachers struggled to set adequate activities and to provide suitable rubrics and developmental feedback. Numerous, generic and unclear assessment standards and many ambiguous requirements impacted negatively on the implementation of assessment. No school conducted assessment that adhered well to official requirements, demonstrating both the difficulty of putting the curriculum into practice and the shortcomings of the teachers and schools.

DEDICATION

To my late mother: Louise Mpemba Mbala, my wife: Sandrine Ndongala Mputu, my two sons: Murphy Kimvuni Ndungu and Merveil Mpemba Ndungu, and to all my brothers and sisters.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
AS	Assessment Standard
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CASS	Continuous Assessment
INTO	Irish National Teaching Organization
LO	Learning Outcome
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a prominent and topical issue in education. It is often the subject of policy changes that require teachers to rethink the manner in which they conduct assessment. These changes often render the implementation of assessment challenging as teachers become uncertain and confused about what is expected of them (Brown: 2005; Ntuli: 2013; Vandeyar: 2005; Jansen: 2010). As a result, most assessment fails to collect and provide an adequate and accurate evidence of learners' achievement and/or performance (Vandeyar: 2005).

As a primary school teacher I was very uncertain about my own assessment practice and the same applied to a number of teachers I engaged in that regard. Our uncertainty stemmed from the fact that: (a) the changes in assessment conflicted with the traditional manner in which we used to assess. (b) We lacked adequate assessment skills, guidance and support which the new demands in assessment required. (c) Assessment was introduced with multiple official requirements of which most were ambiguous, confusing, inconsistent and difficult to understand and adhere to (refer to Appendix V for more information on teachers' views on assessment). As a result, we approached assessment and interpreted official requirements differently. This is where I started wondering whether teachers, including myself, possessed adequate assessment tools and used appropriate methods and strategies to engage in assessment of a standard that promoted the intention of the policy.

My uncertainty was compounded by poor performance in systemic assessment in literacy and numeracy that the Western Cape Department of Education uses to measure the quality of education. The 2009 results showed an average pass of 48, 6% in literacy and 17, 4% in numeracy (Western Cape Education Department: 2011). It is possible that one of the contributing factors to poor performance was the standard of teachers' assessment. It failed to prepare learners adequately to engage with systemic evaluation. Thus, I decided to investigate and describe what constituted teachers' formal assessment of English in a Grade Six classroom.

1.1 Assessment in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)

The RNCS referred to assessment (Department of Education 2002: 125) as

A continuous, planned process of gathering information about the performance of learners measured against the assessment standards of the learning outcomes. It requires clearly defined criteria and a variety of appropriate strategies and methods to enable teachers to give constructive feedback to learners and to report to parents and other interested people.

This definition underscores the importance of assessment in relation to curriculum, learning and learners. Assessment provides feedback in terms of teaching and learning, it is the measure of learners' performance, determines the learners' fate as to whether or not they will progress to the next grade, and is used as one of the performance standards the department of Education evaluates teachers on (Department of Education: nd). It is therefore important that its application in the classroom should be appropriate, guided and predicated upon well-informed principles.

In South Africa and in various other countries around the world, assessment has undergone a marked shift as a result of radical reforms that have taken place in education (Vandeyar: 2005).

In 1997 in South Africa, Curriculum 2005 (C2005) (Department of Education; nd: 2) was launched with the introduction of a variant of outcomes-based education (OBE). In 2004 the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) came into effect as a result of C2005 Review (Department of Education: nd). Despite the review, the assessment principles of the RNCS and those of C2005 remained the same (Department of Basic Education: 2009) and "subsequent attempts to determine and clarify an assessment policy for the RNCS had resulted in a policy that was extremely onerous, misunderstood and inconsistent for teachers in terms of requirements" (Department of Basic Education 2009: 30).

A number of characteristics defined the assessment philosophy of OBE. It was no longer viewed as an add on, but as an integral part of the classroom instructional discourse. It had to be done continuously because learning was a continuous process and learners learned in different ways and at different paces (Department of Education: nd). Assessment had to use different methods, strategies, forms, etc. depending on its purpose. To assist in its implementation, OBE identified learning outcomes (LO) and their associated assessment standards (AS) in each learning area. Teaching and learning focussed towards a or learning outcome(s) and ASs described the level at which learners had to demonstrate the achievement of the LO(s). "Furthermore, assessment had to use explicit criteria, be focussed on

demonstrable performance and make use of suitable strategies and useful feedback to learners” (Department of Education: nd; 2002: 135, Vandeyar 2005: 462).

Despite these well intended radical changes, teachers grappled to understand, manage and deal with the new and complex assessment demands (Vandeyar: 2005). This was largely because the increasing role that teachers had to play in OBE conflicted with their beliefs and value systems (Vandeyar: 2005). It was a new concept for teachers to assess continuously formally and informally. They were required to use a variety of methods, strategies and forms which they were not used to or familiar with. They were also required to give developmental feedback to learners which they did not know how to do, and to use a range of assessment techniques, etc. (Ntuli 2013). (Refer to Appendix V for more information on teachers’ attitude towards assessment).

The 2009 Curriculum Review of the RNCS (Department of Basic Education 2009: 31) found that there were numerous assessment requirements and ASs. ASs were too generic and unclear in terms of what was to be assessed and how it had to be assessed. No clear guidelines or adequate guidance was provided and in the absence of which, argues the review (Department of Basic Education: 2009: 31), “there was the perception that performance had to be measured against all ASs.”

Other issues that compounded the situation (Department of Basic Education: 2009) included: a set of requirements embedded in the RNCS and its complementary assessment documents which teachers either were not aware of or found confusing and difficult to adhere to; inadequate promotion of the RNCS (Vandeyar: 2005) and teachers’ difficulty in aligning assessment with the intended learning owing to a lack of content specification. As a consequence, teachers did what they assumed was appropriate but which resulted in wide-ranging and inconsistent assessment practices between teachers and schools (Department of Basic Education: 2009).

1.1.1 Formal Assessment in the Intermediate Phase (Grades Four-Six)

Formal assessment provides a systematic way of evaluating how well learners are progressing in a particular subject and in a grade. It addresses the intended curriculum outcomes and the continuum of learning that is required to reach those outcomes (Manitoba Education: 2006). It intends to sample the depth and breadth of curriculum areas using different methods, forms

and strategies in ways that represent the nature and complexity of the intended learning (Department of Education: nd). The different forms and methods that it uses need to be appropriate to the knowledge domain being tested and to the level of the learners. Its requirements should spell out for teachers what they should teach, at what level and how they can ascertain whether the learning has been attained (Department of Education: nd).

The consequences of formal assessment are often far-reaching and affect learners seriously. As a result, teachers have the responsibility of reporting learners' achievement accurately and fairly, based on evidence obtained from a variety of skills, contexts and applications (Manitoba Education: 2006; Department of Basic Education: nd).

The results of formal assessment should be recorded and should be used to decide whether or not a learner should progress to the next grade. "When it takes place, teachers must ensure that the criteria are very clear and explicit to the learners before the assessment process" (Department of Basic Education nd: 3-5). Additionally, it helps learners and teachers to evaluate achievement in the development of a particular skill and in the understanding of a particular area of knowledge (The Irish National Teachers' Organization: 2008). It provides feedback to teachers, learners and parents, and other interested parties. Finally, it evaluates how successful the learning experience had been for the learners rather than to expose their deficiency (Cizek et al: 1995).

Formal Assessment of English

English is considered in the context of the languages learning area which distinguished between Home Language, First Additional Language and Second Additional Language (Department of Education: nd).

The Home Language ASs supported the development of assessment standards of various types of literacies that assumed that learners were able to read, understand and speak the language taken at home language level. The First Additional Language presupposed that the learner did not necessarily have any knowledge of the language and therefore the curriculum started by developing the learner's ability to read, understand and speak the language. The Second Additional Language is intended for learners who wished to learn three languages (Department of Education: nd).

The RNCS (Department of Education; nd: 4; Department of Education: 2002) outlined six LOs but with different ASs each for both the Home Language and the First Additional Language towards which assessment had to be conducted. LOs included listening, speaking, reading and viewing, writing, thinking and reasoning, and language structure or grammar. All six LOs were interdependent, equally important, and had to be assessed adequately and continuously in an integrated manner (Department of Education: nd; Department of Education: 2002).

The Department of Education (nd: 4) further stated that:

the assessment of the Home Language and First Additional Language was not different both in methodology and approach. The differences were on the complexity of the texts learners had to be exposed to and on the LO that had to be emphasized at a particular time.

For example, the Home Language level had to deal with more complex texts than the additional language levels. In the Home Language, the LOs dealing with reading and writing had to be weighted more than other LOs while with the First Additional Language, Listening and Speaking took precedence over other LOs.

Languages assessment was divided into tasks. A formal assessment task consisted of an activity or a number of activities designed to assess a range of skills or competencies (Department of Education: nd). It concerned itself with the development of learners' language and literacy and had to assess a variety of skills using different forms and strategies within the framework of the communicative and text-based approaches.

The goal of communicative ability is to assess communicative competence (Richards 2006: 2). It places emphasis on the subject knowledge and proficiency. In this approach, according to Weir (1990:9 and 16); Department of Education (2008: 10):

the types of tasks learners should deal with, should be representative of the types of those they might encounter in their real-life situations. They should provide learners with extensive opportunities to acquire the language skills necessary to perform certain required functions.

Assessment tasks should provide learners with many opportunities to practice or produce the language by solving problems and interacting in social or practical situations. A text-based approach explores language in texts and in an integrated manner in relation to their contexts rather than in isolation (Department of Education: 2008). In so doing, it explores the

interaction between the text and the learners to enable them to become competent and critical readers, writers, viewers and designers of texts. It involves reading, viewing, analysing and producing different kinds of texts (Department of Education 2008: 10). The text is the unit around which all assessment activities are centred.

1.2 Purpose and Significance of the Study

The manner in which assessment is implemented in the classroom has an enormous impact on learners' educational experience in terms of how and what they learn, as well as how they perform (Black & al: 2004). It is in this context that the study has set out to examine and describe what constituted teachers' formal assessment of English in Grade Six in order to provide classroom data that can inform discussion of the nature and quality of assessment in English Home Language (HL) and First Additional Language (FAL) as well as to determine the extent to which teachers' assessment match curriculum requirements.

Cross (1995: 26) believes that involvement in classroom research in general, and that of assessment in particular contributes to the restructuring of teaching and learning. This is made possible through access to the natural settings of real classrooms that allow descriptions of what constitutes actual learning. In this regard, the study will draw from the experiences of the teachers involved to deepen understanding of formal assessment practices and highlight the challenges they encounter in its application.

It will also highlight teachers' as well as learners' areas of strengths and weaknesses. This information may assist teachers, schools and policy developers. Teachers may use it as a resource tool in the classroom in order to improve on their assessment practices. Schools may use it to support teachers and to develop their assessment guidelines. By knowing what teachers' concerns are and what they are or are not doing well when they assess, policy developers will set practical, explicit and realistic requirements where necessary. Finally, the results of the study add to the existing literature and can assist in the design of a course or an in-service teacher development course on formal assessment.

1.3 Research Question

What are the intentions of and the methods used by Grade Six teachers in assessing English?

Research Sub-Questions

1. What is the scope and range of the teachers' assessment practices?
2. Are their assessment practices in English Home Language and First Additional Language compatible with the curriculum documents?

1.4 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into seven chapters and there is not a separate review chapter as the literature review has been incorporated into each of the descriptive chapter according to the topic of the chapter in order to demonstrate clearly how the results and conclusions relate to the literature and theory.

The introduction which is Chapter One contextualizes the study, motivates its relevance and importance, and sets out the overall goals and aims of the study. It also provides an outline of each chapter. Chapter Two documents the design and methodology that the study has followed. Chapter Three gives a description of teachers' short answer response and objective items. Since these types of items are mainly used in assessment of reading comprehension and language structure, the chapter starts by reviewing the literature of the purpose for reading, that of the processes of comprehension as well as that of assessment of vocabulary and grammar. Thereafter it reviews the literature of each item format dealt with in the chapter. Finally, it presents and analyses the findings related to the chapter. Chapter Four is concerned with the description of extended writing assessment. It starts with a review of the literature of extended writing and then describes and analyses the findings of teachers' assessment. Chapter Five describes oral assessment including listening, speaking and reading aloud. It presents a review of each of the three aspects and thereafter describes and analyses the findings. Chapter Six gives an account of the nature and range of teachers' assessment and their compatibility with official assessment requirements, textbooks and the respective schools assessment policy documents. The conclusion is the final chapter.

1.5 Research Limitations

The sample of four schools makes it difficult to generalize the results to the whole population of teachers in South Africa. However, they give us an insight of what happens when teachers assess. If observation had been part of data collection, it might have revealed the nature of oral interaction (including body language) that took place between teacher and learner and

among learners themselves. This was not within the scope of the research, however. Finally it was very difficult to demand from teachers every piece of documentation and information that was requested of them.

1.6 Conclusion

Chapter One has framed the study and located assessment within the educational process. It has established what the study seeks to achieve and the manner in which it intends to do so.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Methodology

In an effort to interrogate and describe what constituted assessment in a Grade Six English classroom, a qualitative approach was decided upon. The strengths of the method, argues Maxwell (1996) rest upon a number of tenets including: (1) its inductive approach which allows possibilities of drawing general conclusions from particular facts. (2) Its focus on specific situations or people. (3) Its emphasis on words rather than numbers with the potential to explain processes resulting in a better understanding of situations. (4) Its propensity to generate results and theories that are understandable and experientially credible and (5) its formative evaluations intended to help improve existing practice. Furthermore Maxwell (1996: 17) states that; qualitative approach creates possibilities to:

1. Understand the participants' perspective of and how they make sense of the events, actions and situations they are involved in, and how their understandings influence their behaviour.
2. Understand the particular context within which the participants act, and the influence that this context has on their actions.
3. Understand the processes by which events and actions take place.
4. Developing causal explanation.

A qualitative method is relevant in this study because it will facilitate an understanding of the underlying processes and principles that guide assessment practices, of the people involved as well as of the context and the environment within which assessment takes place.

2.2 Research Strategy

The research is based on three case studies which focused on describing the dynamics of assessment of English prevalent within four Grade Six classes located in three different settings.

A case study approach is a research strategy that plays an important role in examining the complexities of phenomena. It is predicated upon "a process of scholarly inquiry and exploration that focusses on understanding the dynamics within single settings, and whose underlying purpose is to create new knowledge" (Eisenhardt 1989: 534). A researcher who embarks on a case study research is usually interested in a specific phenomenon which he/she

wishes to understand completely by looking into all the variables and their interacting relationship. It can be used to accomplish various aims, inter alia: to test or generate theories, to provide descriptions, etc. (Eisenhardt 1989: 535).

A case study design is appropriate in this regard because the features of a group of people with their characteristics are being explored in terms of what they do, the context and manner in which they do it (Lumadi: 2013).

Some examples of case studies that describe teachers' assessment practices include: Sikka et al (2007) used four case studies to explore teachers' beliefs and use of assessment. Analysis of Interviews and of assessment scripts found that teachers were frustrated as a result of cognitive inconsistencies arising from the use of multiple choice formats which they considered less valid than other types (Sikka et al: 2007: 250).

Lumadi (2013) conducted a study that investigated the challenges affecting teachers' classroom assessment practices in the North West province of South Africa. Findings revealed multiple challenges as a result of a variety of factors.

Abraham Merid carried out two case studies in which he analysed two Grade Seven teachers' English end of year tests from a private and a public school in an attempt to determine the match with the syllabus. Findings revealed a minimum match of 17 % and 15% from the public and the private school respectively (Merid: 2002: VI).

Dowrich (2008) completed a study involving seven teachers from different schools that reported on their views regarding the implementation of continuous assessment. Findings from semi-structured interviews showed that success depended to a large extent on training, leadership, administrative support, parental involvement and resources.

Case study research has a number of strengths and weaknesses. Strengths include: the potential to generate new theory as a result of association, comparison or differences of evidence. Theories can be tested and hypotheses can be proven false. A third strength is that the resultant theory is likely to be empirically valid (Eisenhardt: 1989).

Some weaknesses may include a theory that is narrow, erroneous and misleading as a result of drawing conclusions from particular cases. The likelihood to produce a theory which is complex and a temptation to build a theory which captures everything (Eisenhardt: 1989: 548).

2.3 Grade Selection

Grade Six is one of the most important grades in South Africa's educational system. Firstly, it celebrates the end of the intermediate phase. Secondly, it is one of the grades that host systemic evaluation in languages and mathematics. As a result, Grade Six has become a measure that benchmarks the achievement of two phases in literacy and numeracy, and the commencement of another. Furthermore, the Grade Six systemic results are the basis for target-setting and evaluation of teachers, schools and education authorities. What happens in a Grade Six English class is of significant interest to many.

2.4 Selection of Case Study

The case studies included four primary schools that are located in three different environment or settings and that represent two different levels of resources namely well and poorly resourced schools. Other criteria that have influenced the choice included; the level at which the school used the English language, the majority of the population group in the community where the school is located and the majority of the learners the schools cater for. The interest in these case studies will generate information regarding:

- the nature and place of the assessment discourse in these different settings;
- their differences and similarities in assessment implementation;
- what worked and what did not work in each setting;
- the challenges that teachers are confronted with in each setting when they assess and what steps have been taken to overcome them;
- whether the resources, location of the school and the social background of the learners, and the community influenced teaching and learning processes in any way possible.

The first school that was chosen was in Pinelands which is one of the up-market suburbs in Cape Town and which is inhabited by mixed families of middle class background. The school was very well resourced and taught English at the Home Language level. There were two Grade Six classes and both teachers participated in the study. The second school was located

in Woodstock which is a predominantly coloured working class area. The school was under-resourced. It had two Grade Six classes and taught English as Home Language. Both teachers took part in the study. The third and fourth school were two township under-resourced schools. They were located on the outskirts of Cape Town in Langa and Gugulethu respectively. They taught English as First Additional Language. There were two Grade Sixes in each school but only one teacher was responsible for teaching English.

2.5 Data Collection

Before embarking on data collection, permission had to be obtained from the Western Cape Department of Education and the respective schools. Parents also had to give permission for the use of their children's assessment scripts. (Refer to Appendix VI for all correspondence).

Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with the teachers, collection of yearly marked formal assessment scripts as well as learners' books. Three different categories of learners were generated from whom data were collected. The categories included strong, average and weak learners. (Refer to Appendix V for interviews with teachers).

2.6 Data Analysis

Chapter 3 to 5 are concerned with short answer response and objective items, extended writing, and oral work. They are analysed according to the literature that forms the basis of their respective item types and the different approaches they used to assess. Analysis was also done with the manner in which different categories of learners provided answers in respect of the different levels of language work. Marking was examined in relation to how teachers marked and gave feedback. Finally, in chapter 6 teachers' assessment was examined against official policy requirements, textbooks and individual school assessment policy.

CHAPTER 3: SHORT ANSWER RESPONSE AND OBJECTIVE ITEM TYPES

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three intends to examine and describe what constituted teachers' assessment when they used the above mentioned item types, how learners responded and how teachers marked it. Data were obtained through the collection of learners' marked assessment scripts in the four case study schools.

These item types have predetermined correct responses with very little deviation permitted from the right answer as determined by the items designer (Parsons and Fenwick 1999: 2). They include short answer response, multiple-choice/true-false and matching items.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section, which is the introduction, explores reading comprehension assessed by the above mentioned items, processes of comprehension, assessment of vocabulary and that of grammar since the above item types are used mainly in assessment of reading comprehension and grammar. The second section offers a literature review of each item format, and the third section will describe and analyse teachers' assessment.

3.1.1 Reading Comprehension Assessed by Short Answer Response and Objective Items

“People read for personal interest or pleasure, to participate in society and to learn. For young readers, emphasis is placed on interest or pleasure (reading for literacy experience) and on learning (reading to acquire and use information)” (PIRLS 2011: 19). Each of these different purposes is associated with different types of texts which differ in the way in which ideas are organized and presented.

The main form used in literary reading is generally narrative fiction. In this genre, the reader interacts with texts associated with imagined events, setting, actions, consequences, characters, atmosphere, feelings, ideas, etc. Through this form, young learners have the opportunity to explore situations and feelings they have never encountered while events, actions and consequences described in it illuminate those they encounter in real life (PIRLS

2011: 21). Reading to acquire and use information is associated with informational texts through which the reader engages with aspects of the real world in order to understand his environment better and to find out why things happen the way they do. The reader will go beyond the acquisition of information and use it in reasoning and in action. This type of purpose is connected to informative articles and instructional texts (PIRLS 2011: 20). Examples of informational texts include historical facts, diary entries, personal accounts, letters, biographies/autobiographies, recipes, articles, etc.

The above different purposes have implications for assessment which should take into consideration the primary purpose of the text type. This means that an assessment dealing with informational text should involve questions about the information contained in the text and an assessment that involves literary experience should address questions related to the theme, characters, setting, etc. (PIRLS 2011)

3.1.2 Processes of Comprehension

Processes of comprehension are concerned with the construction of meaning when reading takes place, and the manner in which the item is framed determines the process of comprehension involved (PIRLS: 2011). PIRLS (2011: 22) identify four ways of constructing meaning. They include:

(1) Focussing on and retrieving explicitly stated information or ideas. This is concerned with locating and understanding the content that is relevant to the question posed. The process involves little or no inference or interpretation, and the focus remains at the sentence or phrase level. Items that may measure this type of processing may include:

- Identifying information that is relevant to the specific goal of reading
- Looking for specific ideas
- Searching for definitions of words or phrases
- Etc.

(2) Making inferences. This is about understanding the text beyond its surface meaning. It is concerned with filling the gaps in meaning that occurs or does not occur in texts by connecting two or more ideas or pieces of information. When making inferences, the focus may be on a section of or the whole text. Activities that may relate to this kind of text processing may include the following:

- cause and effect
- concluding what is the main point made by a series of arguments
- identifying generalizations made in the text
- etc.

(3) Interpreting and integrating information and ideas. This process engages the reader beyond the sentence or phrase level of the text. It leads readers to draw on their understanding of the world, on their background knowledge and experience in order to make connections that are not only implicit, but that may be open to some interpretation.

Such text processing may involve the following activities:

- discerning the overall message or theme of a text
- considering an alternative to actions of characters
- comparing and contrasting text information
- etc.

(4) Examining and evaluating content, language, and textual elements. It is about shifting the focus from the construction of meaning to the examination of the text itself in terms of content, language and elements of the text such as structure. Reading activities that assess such processes may include:

- evaluating the likelihood that the events described could really happen
- Describing how the author came to an ending
- judging the completeness or clarity of information in the text
- etc.

3.1.3 Assessment of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is fundamental in understanding what is read since there is a link between vocabulary and reading and comprehension (NAEP: 2011). “Comprehension assessment should also include assessing learners’ understanding of word meaning” (NAEP 2009: 3). This is because comprehension depends on the learner’s ability to understand content-bearing words according to the context within which they have been used in the passage. Therefore, vocabulary questions are both a measure of passage comprehension and a measure of learners’ understanding of specific words (NAEP: 2009).

Vocabulary items should ask about words as they are used in the context of passages that learners read. Learners should not be asked to provide definitions of words in isolation as word meaning is not fixed but depends on the context in which the word appears. Quite often, a reader may not be able to provide the definition of a word, but may be able to understand the word meaning well enough that comprehension is not impeded. On the other hand a reader may be able to associate a word with a definition but not able to apply that definition to building understanding of a particular context that uses the word (NAEP: 2009).

3.1.4 Assessment of Grammar

Purpura (2004: 36) and Ellis (2004: 229) refer to grammar as “the knowledge about the rules and structures of a language and about the uses to which language can be put to.” Ellis (2006) identified two types of grammatical knowledge including analysed and metalinguistic knowledge. Analysed knowledge is the awareness of how grammar structures work while metalinguistic knowledge is the verbalization of grammatical rules. The general purpose of a grammar test should be to collect information about how well learners use grammar to convey meaning in specific situations (Ellis 2004: 229).

3.2 Literature Review of Short Answer Response and Objective Items

3.2.1 Short Answer response Items

According to Green and Johnson (2010: 25) a short answer response item is “an all-purpose form of an item that has a wide application in general and in education in particular.” It involves skills such as the ability to present an argument and to justify decisions.

Short answer response and objective items are all forms of supply items as the learner has to provide a response rather than selecting it. They mainly include items that direct learners to fill in blanks, to write responses to direct questions, to supply words, numbers, or both in response to numerical problems; to identify pictures; to label diagrams, and to write definitions (Green and Johnson: 2010). When using these items, educational objectives frequently state that; the learner will be able to recall, remember, label, list, state, define, describe, name, etc. (Fleming and Chambers 1983: 30, Kirby & Cascher 1987: 8).

Responses to these categories may be a single word, a phrase, or a few sentences. They may vary from having learners write a definition to having them justify or support points from an

argument. They give learners a structure for answering but allow more freedom in these answers (Lamprianou and Athanasou: 2009, Green and Johnson: 2010, Parson and Fenwick: 1999).

These types of items can be used to assess learners' understanding of knowledge and concepts that can be expressed in brief form. They have a clearly identified, correct answer and are marked objectively. However, although learners' responses are short, it does not mean that they assess only recall of information. They can also be used to assess comprehension, analysis and synthesis (Lamprianou and Athanasou 2009: 207).

Gronlund (1998: 12) identifies two different categories of short answer response items. They include:

- a) items in which a question is asked in its entirety, referred to here as short answer question, and to which the learner has to supply or construct an answer. For example:

- Why do you think the captain reacted angrily?
- What kept the train going?

- b) Completion items. They are items which consist of a statement in which one or two words have been omitted for the learner to complete with the appropriate term or terms. For example:

_____ is a word that names people, places, animals and objects
_____ is the first multi-racial democratically elected president of South Africa.

A third category may be observed referred to in this study as "mixed items". These items involve neither a direct question nor a completion. They ask learners to, inter alia, define, describe, list, etc. For example:

- Name three herbivores in the text.
- List and describe two values that the main character possesses.

Advantages of Short Answer Response items

According to Lamprianou and Athanasou (2009), Green and Johnson (2010: 226),

a short-answer response activity can include more items than other formats of objective activities and therefore can sample a wide range of content and concepts associated with learning goals of an instructional unit. Since learners have to generate answers, the possibility of guessing the correct answer is greatly reduced. They are easy items to construct and mark. They allow for a greater scope than other objective formats to show whether the learner has greater knowledge of the subject. They allow for a broad range of knowledge outcomes to be measured, and learners can complete a large number of items in a fairly short time and therefore sampling a lot of content.

Disadvantages of Short answer response items

It is sometimes difficult to structure items so that they have only one correct response without any variation. As a result, they lack the marking ease associated with other objective formats. They take longer to mark than selected formats as the supplied answers must be read carefully. This results in a lack of marking economy. It is extremely difficult to construct a short-answer response item that measures analysis, synthesis or evaluation and that can be answered only in one word, a phrase or a sentence (Hales and Marshall: 1971, Lamprianou and Athanasou: 2009: 207). They encourage rote learning and poor learners' handwriting poses a potential problem when scoring.

Guidelines for Constructing Short Answer response Items

Hopkins (1998: 6), Oosterhof (1999: 12) and (Green and Johnson 2010: 226) identify the following guidelines as relevant to constructing effective SAR items. They include:

- The item should measure a meaningful and specific learning outcome. The content of the item should be relevant enough to warrant a question.
- The question should ask for specific information and should be worded concisely and precisely.
- There should be no clues to the answer and the mark for the question should be indicated.
- There should be easier as well as difficult questions arranged in order of difficulty
- The wording and/or the choice of word constituting the item should not be a hindrance to a learner's ability to correctly answer the question.
- Direct item format is preferable to incomplete sentence format. Direct questions are generally clearer than incomplete sentences and call for a single correct answer.

Incomplete sentence formats should be used if doing so increases the clarity of the item.

- Item phraseology should not provide clues as to the item's answer.
- Use only a single, or at the most two blanks per item.

3.2.2 Multiple Choice Items

A multiple choice item consists of two parts including a stem and a list of suggested alternatives. The stem may be in the form of either a question or an incomplete statement, and the list of alternatives contains one correct or best answer and a number of incorrect answers often referred to as distractors (Lamprianou and Athanasou: 2009, Hudson : 1983 and Burton et al: 1991). For example:

Choose the correct answer.

- What is the largest province of South Africa?
 - A Gauteng
 - B Western Cape
 - C Northern Cape
 - D Mpumalanga

Choose the correct answer

- The only province in South Africa which is governed by the opposition is
 - A Eastern Cape
 - B Western Cape
 - C Kwazulu Natal
 - D Northern Cape

Choose the best answer.

- Why was Mandela imprisoned?
 - A He was a threat to the Apartheid regime.
 - B He broke the laws of the Apartheid regime.
 - C He campaigned publicly against the apartheid regime
 - D The Apartheid regime wanted to silence him.

Advantages of Multiple Choice Items

“Multiple-choices are the most versatile and flexible items” (Hales and Marshall 1971: 93 and 96 and Lamprianou and Athanasou 2009: 224). They can be used to measure instructional objectives virtually at all levels of cognitive domain and are adaptable for use in essentially all subject matter areas and at all grade levels (Lamprianou and Athanasou: 2009). They can include a large number of items to be answered within a short space of time covering several instructional objectives in many content areas. Compared to constructed response activities, marking errors are of small concern. They can be scored uniformly, rapidly, accurately and objectively in the sense that there is a designated answer. They reduce the anxiety of subjective marking for a teacher as well as the potential for any bias in marking that may discriminate against a particular learner. Items can be re-used with less concern for security of the activity since it is more difficult to remember activity content and item responses are easily analysed. Unlike the short-answer question, they force the learner to distinguish not only what is correct but also what is incorrect.

Disadvantages of Multiple Choice Items

Hales and Marshall (1971: 92) and Lamprianou and Athanasou (2009: 225) argue that; “*there is a tendency to use multiple-choices to measure factual knowledge and therefore penalize the creative learner. They are not suitable to measure creativity.*” Good and effective items writing are difficult particularly when writing higher cognitive order ones, therefore, considerable time and effort is needed. They cannot be used to measure a learner’s ability to organize materials or to clearly express his answers according to acceptable language usage rules. It is not always clear what specific difficulty the learner experienced with a question. A single correct answer can sometimes be obtained without any prior knowledge of the subject or instruction of the subject. The real economies of multiple-choice items can only be achieved with a large number of learners. There are obvious limitations with outcomes that require performance, expression or presentation (Lamprianou and Athanasou: 2009).

Guidelines to Construct Multiple Choice Items

Lamprianou and Athanasou (2009) and Hales and Marshall (1971) have identified the following as guidelines for constructing multiple choice items including; the item should contain one central theme or idea and should establish only one frame of reference for responding. The item should be concise, unambiguous, and grammatically correct. Unless they are a vital part of the achievement to be measured, difficult words and phrases should be

avoided. The item should be presented in a clear and simple writing style. Preferably item should be stated in positive rather than negative terms. Prepare at least 4 alternatives for each item.

3.2.3 True-False Items

True-false items are used to assess knowledge of the basic facts or ideas in a subject area (Lamprianou and Athanasou 2009: 217). A true-false format is referred to as “a statement which the learner must determine whether it is correct or incorrect” (Green and Johnson 2010: 189). In the most widely used form, the learner is instructed to mark the statement true or false, right or wrong, yes or no or correct or incorrect.

When constructing true-false questions, the general instructions for registering agreement or disagreement are a part of the activity directions and appear either at the beginning of the activity or in an introductory statement preceding all of true-false items on the activity. For example:

Read the following statements and state whether they are True or False.

1. The 2010 Soccer World cup took place in Australia. _____
2. Jacob Zuma is the second post-apartheid president of South Africa. _____

Advantages of True-False Items

Hales and Marshall (1971: 114) finds the following advantages for true-false items. They are adaptable for use in situations where the measurement of the acquisition of factual, non-interpretive information is desired. They can be marked rapidly and accurately even by people who are unqualified to teach. The marking is completely objective. Activities can be administered quickly since less time per item is required to answer. The structure of the item-type is less complex than the structures of the other section-types. Compared to multiple-choices and matching types, true-false is less difficult to write and requires less time to develop.

Disadvantages of True-False Items

It is concerned with the measurement of factual knowledge and is seldom applicable to the measurement of higher-order mental processes. There is a 50/50 chance of getting the item

correct. The pattern of responses to a true-false activity is of little value to locate gaps in a learner's knowledge and even an analysis of the pattern of responses of the class would be of only limited assistance in identifying specific instructional objectives not achieved by the class. There is little discrimination between those learners receiving higher marks and those of lower marks because of the relatively greater influence of chance (Lamprianou and Athanasou 2009: 220; Hales and Marshall 1971: 115).

Guidelines for Writing True-False Items

The following may be considered when writing true-false items. They include; the examiner should make sure that the statement is entirely true or false. Only one idea should be included in each question. The true and false answers should be placed in a random order. The examiner can use false answers to reinforce misconceptions and true answers for correct ideas. A straightforward language should be used and double negatives should be avoided. Words such as usually, none, always, etc. that provide answer clues should be avoided and statement should be concise, unambiguous and grammatically correct. The examiner should avoid a pattern in the order of the responses questions (Lamprianou and Athanasou: 2009).

3.2.4 Matching Items

A matching item is helpful for assessing knowledge of related facts, events, ideas, terms, definitions, rules or symbols (Lamprianou and Athanasou 2009: 215 and Hales and Marshall 1971: 124). Green and Johnson (2010:191) argue that; "a matching format is useful when the learning goal requires learners to connect two types of facts." It occurs in clusters which must contain an introductory statement, a set of related premises and a list of alternates to be shared by all the premises in the cluster (Hales and Marshall 1971: 125). It, therefore, functions as a total unit. The introductory statement must set a general frame of reference for responding to the item. It should include information concerning how to respond and should clearly indicate to the learner how to proceed in selecting the responses. For example: For each province of South Africa's provinces listed below in column I, find its capital city in column II. Record your choice on the line preceding the province number.

<i>Column I</i>	<i>Column II</i>
_____ 1. Free State	A. Kimberly
_____ 2.Kwa-Zulu Natal	B. Nelspruit
_____ 3. Northern Cape	C. Bloemfontein
_____ 4. Mpumalanga	D. Pietermaritzburg

Advantages of Matching Items

Green and Johnson (2010: 191); Hales and Marshall (1971: 124) and Lamprianou and Athanasou (2009: 215) are of the view that; the matching format can be used to assess a broad span of content in one question. It provides evidence that the learner has mastered skills of classification. It can be marked objectively and easily. It is; however, more difficult to prepare than true-false format. It can be used to measure lower levels of cognitive domains such as vocabulary, dates, events, simple relationships, etc. and to some extent comprehension and analysis such as relationships between examples of species objects and their categories.

Disadvantages of Matching Items

It is not always easy to adapt it to all subject areas and to find items which provide plausible options for more than one answer. It is mainly used to assess basic factual knowledge and teachers find it difficult to use it for higher cognitive domains (Green and Johnson 2010: 190 Lamprianou and Athanasou 2009: 215).

Guidelines for Writing Matching Items

- Do not list premises in the same order as responses.
- One item should be kept on one page.
- Provide explicit directions.
- The premises should be longer than the responses.

Example: Match the definition in column A to the corresponding word in column B

A	B
A formal expression of preference for a candidate for office.	Slowly
The capacity to accept or tolerate delay.	Queue
Not able to move quickly	Vote
A line or sequence of people or vehicles awaiting their turn to be attended to or to proceed.	Patience

3.3 Description and Analysis of Case Studies

This section describes and analyses the findings of the nature of assessments in the case study schools. It will include the nature of their items, the proportion of each item type, the manner in which learners provided answers and teachers did the marking.

3.3.1 Short Answer Response Items

North Beach Primary

Examples of short answer response items.

- Fill in the appropriate collective nouns in the spaces below.
 - a. The _____ of onlookers all watched the magician with delight.
 - b. The child got lost in a _____ of trees.
- Fill in the missing punctuation.
 - a. in December we swam at Clifton beach
 - b. yesterday in read about the diwali festival in my English class
- Fill in the correct pronoun.
 - a. Rachel said that _____ was fed up.
 - b. All the teachers went to a staff party but _____ cars are parked in the school's parking lot.
- Write the correct form of the verb in the spaces below.
 - a. When I was in school, I _____ (to do) my homework every day.
 - b. Joey and Mike _____ (to be) friends a long time ago.
- Add or complete;
 - a. a predicate to each sentence: The police officer _____.
 - b. a subject to each sentence: _____ was singing a cheerful song.
- Complete the table by dividing the following sentences into subject, verb and object.
 - a. Shoba is the eldest child of the family
 - b. Rakesh and his mother take hundreds of earthen oil-lamps out of a tub.

subject	Predicate	
	verb	object
a.		
b.		

Figure 3.1

North Beach Primary administered 232 short answer response items representing 90% of the proportion of items conducted throughout the year. They covered all three categories of items discussed above namely; completion, short answer question and mixed items.

Items adhered to guidelines and principles appropriate for the construction of short answer response items. Assessment of comprehension did not distinguish between the different purposes for reading. Teachers preferred completion items to assess grammatical skills, short answer questions to evaluate comprehension and mixed items were used to assess both grammatical and comprehension skills. Assessment of vocabulary was not done and that of grammar was based on analysed knowledge. Most items focused on retrieving explicitly stated information or ideas. There were instances when instructions were not specific enough which created confusion in the learners' responses. For example;

- Write the correct form of the verb in the spaces below.

- a. When I was in school, I _____ (to do) my homework every day.
- b. Joey and Mike _____ (to be) friends a long time ago.

Some learners responded as follows.

- a. When I was in school, I used to do my homework every day.
- b. Joey and Mike used to be friends a long time ago.

Instructions could have read; use the verb between brackets in the simple past tense.

With regard to how learners provided answers and for the purpose of this study, three differential intellectual categories of learners have been considered. A learner was classified strong, average or weak. A learner was considered strong if he/she realized a minimum pass of 70% to a maximum of a 100% or a code four and a learner was deemed average if his/her pass average ran from 50 to 69% or a code three, and a weak learner's pass ranged from 35 to 49% or a code two.

The analysis revealed that strong learners performed very well in grammar and comprehension while average learners did well in comprehension and struggled a little in grammar. Weak learners struggled in both, but more in grammar than in comprehension.

Levels of English sought to determine whether the language used in the construction of items was appropriate to the developmental level of the learners as well as how learners engaged with the language in relation to word, sentence and text level work.

It was found that items were adequate to the developmental levels of the learners. Strong learners seemed to demonstrate a good command of the language with mistakes in spelling.

They answered in full sentences when necessary to do so and most sentences were grammatically correct including correct punctuation.

Average learners struggled a bit with the command of the language and most struggled with spelling. They did not have an extended vocabulary which resulted in failing to answer in full sentences. Most sentences were grammatically incorrect such as incorrect punctuation, subject and verb agreement, use of incorrect pronouns, etc.

Weak learners had a poor command of the language. They struggled with spelling and word choice. They did not answer in full sentences of which most were grammatically incorrect. For example, use of incorrect punctuation in general; capital letters, apostrophe and commas in particular, subject and verb agreement, use of adjectives, adverbs, subject and predicate, etc. Books demonstrated that learners had exposure essentially to informational texts.

Marking revealed the same trend across different categories of learners. It was done by teachers themselves using a different ink. Teachers assigned grades. A tick mark (✓) or a grade were used for correct answers and a cross (X), a dot (.) or zero (0) for incorrect answers. Teachers usually wrote comments such as “keep up the good work”, etc. or praise (good, very good, excellent, etc.) for those learners who scored from seventy or eighty to a hundred per cent of the overall mark and usually made no comment for those who underperformed.

Road Primary

Examples of short answer response items

- Fill in the missing prepositions
I walked _____ the shop to ask what the time was.
 - Fill in is or are:
Pollution _____ caused by leakage from the ship.
 - Complete by giving the collective noun
A _____ of ships.
 - Are the following sentences a statement, question, exclamation, request or command:
 - a. Wow! I am amazed at all the damage caused by the oil spill. _____
 - b. What was the reason for the leakage? _____
 - Look at the following sentences and state if they are examples of statements, questions, commands, exclamations or requests.
- | Example | Sentence Type |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Would you mind closing the door? | |
| Today is a lovely day. | |
- Where was the treasure taken to be repaired?
 - What was the name of the tug that towed the treasure?
 - Why do people send Valentine's Day cards with pictures of hearts on them?
 - How many passengers were on board the liner?
 - When did they build roads through the rainforest in Brazil?
 - Who is trying to protect the rainforest?
 - Provide a definition, in your own words, for the circulation.
 - Look at the following words and make them opposite in meaning by adding a prefix to the Word.
 - fortunate: _____
 - expected: _____
 - Name any two items seen on this pamphlet.

Figure 3.2

Road Primary conducted 207 (93%) short answer response items. Items adhered to the guidelines and principles fitting the construction of short answer response items and were proportionate to the developmental level of the learners. They included all three categories

discussed in the literature. Teachers preferred using completion and mixed items to assess grammatical skills and short questions to evaluate comprehension. Most items focused on retrieving explicitly stated information or ideas. Assessment of comprehension failed to distinguish between the different purposes for reading and that of vocabulary focused on finding words definition in the dictionary rather than on the understanding of the context in which the word has been used in the text. Assessment of grammar focused on analysed knowledge.

In terms of learners' responses, it was observed that strong learners performed very well in grammar and comprehension, especially those requiring a single word or a phrase. As for levels of English; they seemed to have a limited vocabulary and responded with a good measure of spelling mistakes. At the sentence level work, they mainly constructed simple sentences and struggled with subject and verb concord, pronouns, punctuation, etc. For example:

- "The people is trying to protect the rainforest".
- "Because the British island were a real melting pot of languages".

At the text level work they seemed to do very well in comprehension but struggled to provide text summaries.

Average learners had a limited vocabulary, struggled with spelling and had a poor grammatical awareness. They constructed simple sentences and struggled with subject and verb concord and plural of certain words. For example: "the children is sick". At the text level, learners performed very well in comprehension but struggled to provide textual summaries.

Weak learners also had a limited vocabulary and wrote with a lot of spelling mistakes.

For example: - "He was boan in Michals plan."

- "He's favovrite food is spitget and lizrey."

At the sentence level work, they answered in simple sentences and struggled with punctuation, subject and verb concord. For example: "He's Name areMandiba, Mandiba, He was stind in jeui 27 years." At the text level work, they did a bit better in comprehension when answers needed a single word or a phrase.

As for marking, it was done by teachers themselves. They assigned grades and often used a tick mark (✓) or a grade (according to the value of the individual item) for correct answers and a cross (X), a dot (.) or zero (0) for incorrect ones. Teachers usually wrote comments such as “keep up the good work”, etc. or praise (good, very good, excellent, etc.) for those learners who scored from seventy or eighty to a hundred per cent of the overall mark and usually made no comments for those who scored less.

Zamuli Primary

Examples of short answer response items

- Fill in the blanks:
- choose the best preposition to use in each of the sentences
 1. I'm not capable _____ that type of behaviour. (of, in, at)
 2. List three examples where Jackie showed courage.
 _____, _____, _____
- Find the rhyming words:

Name rhymes with: _____
- How do you think Zola felt when he received this letter?
- What was Sizwe's important news?
- Where did the sick Lion live?
- Why does Ayanda love helping her uncle in his shop?
- Identify:

E.g. identify the subject and the predicate in the following sentences.
 Jackie wanted to escape poverty.
- List/Name:

E.g. - List three examples where Jackie showed courage.
- Change:

E.g. Change the following sentences into passive voice.
 People throughout the world celebrate holy days.
- Summarise what you have learnt in one sentence.
- Punctuate the following sentence;

E.g. she won a scholarship to the university of California in los angeles.
- Rewrite:

E.g. rewrite the following sentence in the present tense.
 She did not like leaving.

Figure 3.3

The teacher from Zamuli conducted 189 (73%) short answer response items. Items were made of the three categories discussed in this study, were appropriate to the developmental level of the learners, and most met the construction guidelines. Most focused on grammatical aspects and those that dealt with textual analysis placed emphasis on retrieving explicitly stated information or ideas. Most items were made of short questions and mixed items. Short response questions were mainly used to assess comprehension activities while mixed items were prevalent in assessing grammar. Assessment of grammar centred on analysed knowledge and no assessment of vocabulary could be found. Assessment of vocabulary did not distinguish between the different purposes for reading.

In terms of answering, the word level work demonstrated that all three categories of learners appeared to have a limited vocabulary. Some Strong learners wrote with a few spelling mistakes while some others wrote quite badly. Average and weak learners wrote with a lot of spelling mistakes. For example: nounce for noun, mothod for method, techter for teacher, etc.

At the sentence level work, learners used mainly simple sentences and all three categories were challenged with language structure. Complex sentences were ungrammatical and senseless. For example: “she was work at the farm”; “they is 4”; “she is eyes very strong she see people at farwhey”; “Nosisa’s grandfather she work for farm for 70 years old”. They also struggled with certain grammatical aspects such as; the use of pronouns, prepositions, identifying parts of speech, punctuation, etc. For example: they identify the parts of speech below as follows: crime: adverb; good: verb; people: adjective; different: verb; choose: noun; etc.

At the text level work, strong and average learners seemed to perform quite well in comprehension when the answer required a word or a phrase. Weak learners struggled a lot.

The marking was done by ticking off correct answers and crossing out incorrect ones. The teacher was not consistent in making comments as they were rarely made to some strong learners only.

Kusala Primary

Examples of short answer response items

- Complete: Use rhyming words to complete the following poem about Hannukkah.

E.g. Light the first of eight tonight,
 The farthest candle to the _____
 List the first and second _____
 When tomorrow is through _____

- Fill in: Read the poem, “Waking on the moon” and fill in the following table.

E.g.

	Rhyming words	Repetition
Stanza 1	I, high	I’m walking on the moon
Stanza 2		
Stanza 3		

- Complete the following table by ticking two bad things and two good things about moving house.

Good	Moving house	Bad
	We have a bigger house	
	Friends can only visit in the weekend	
	Vanessa has to catch a bus to school	
	Vanessa has her own room	

- Fill in the missing words in each of the following sentences.
 1. Do you believe _____ ghosts?
 2. This book belongs _____ me but you can borrow it.
- Who the main characters are?
- Why others will not enjoy the story?
- What is the title of the story?
- How long did Vanessa live in the flat?
- Where do you think this person is?
- Rewrite the following sentence in the present tense. E.g. She did not like leaving.
- Identify alliteration from the following poems.

E.g. Carrying cats
 Rain
 Rain races
 Ripping like wind its restless race
 Rattles like
- Write: Write down the plural of the following word.

E.g. The **wolf** thought that it was a good idea to visit the **lion**.
- Write down the opposite of the underlined words.

E.g. 1. “It’s my pleasure” said the lion.
 2. The lion lay sick in its den.
- Explain whether the story has a good, bad or sad ending.

Figure 3.4

The teacher at this school conducted eight written formal assessments which were all made of short answer response type. Activities included all three categories discussed in this study. Items fit the construction guidelines and were appropriate to the developmental level of the learners. Short questions were used for comprehension activities while completion and mixed items assessed mainly grammatical activities. The main focus of items was the retrieval of explicitly stated information or ideas. Most items were made of short questions and mixed items. Assessment of comprehension failed to take into account the different purposes for reading, grammar assessed analysed knowledge and no vocabulary items could be found.

Answering of short response items revealed that; at the word level work all three categories had a limited vocabulary and that strong learners wrote with limited spelling mistakes while average and weak learners struggled. For example: wondiful for wonderful, bueteful for beautiful, sundaly for suddenly, veneshed for vanished, lernas for learners etc.

The sentence level work demonstrates that all three categories used simple sentences. While strong learners wrote fairly well, average and weak learners struggled with sentences structures. For example: “Yes I enjoying myself to visiting City of Gold. I enjoying to swiMMing the beach everyday”. All three struggled with some grammatical aspects. For example; the use of simple past tense and the past participle of irregular verbs, the use of pronouns, punctuation identification of different parts of speech etc.

The text level work revealed that strong and average learners performed quite well though to a differing degree when answers required a word or a phrase. Weak learners performed quite badly.

Marking was evaluative as it was done by ticking off correct answers and crossing incorrect ones. All activities were graded and the teacher hardly wrote comments.

3.3.2 Multiple Choice and True-False Items

North Beach Primary

Examples of multiple choice items

E.g. Read passage two and answer the questions below by circling the correct answer.

NOTE: The paragraphs are mixed up.

- The correct order for these five paragraphs is...
 - a) a b c d e
 - b) b a c d e
 - c) e a b d c
 - d) c a e b d
 - e) none of the above
- What did Dunlop manufacture?
 - a) bicycles
 - b) Wheels
 - c) tyres
 - d) bicycle pumps
- Which bicycle invention was the first to be like a modern bicycle?
 - a) The Hobby Horse
 - b) The Boneshaker
 - c) The Rover safety Bicycle
 - d) The modern bicycle
- Where was the Rover Bicycle company?
 - a) London
 - b) Coventry
 - c) France
- Bicycle invented before 1888 were not very comfortable.
 - a) True
 - b) False
 - c) The passage does not mention it.
- The Rover Safety Bicycle was a rear-wheel driven bicycle.
 - a) True
 - b) False
 - c) The passage does not mention it.

Figure 3.5

North Beach Primary administered 21 (8%) multiple choice and true-false items. Most multiple choice and true-false items measured factual knowledge. Items used mainly the direct question form, were stated positively and contained three to four options. True-false items used positive stems, were produced in the form of statements, and provided three alternatives. Items were based on a single idea and were brief.

As to how learners' answered, the three categories seemed to perform very well. For marking, teachers ticked off correct answer and crossed incorrect ones.

Road Primary

- During which season did the events in the story take place?

Draw a circle around the letter with the correct answer.

- a) Summer
- b) Spring
- c) Autumn
- d) Winter

- Highlight or underline the correct spelling.

E.g. 1. Favorite favurite favourite

- Look at the following; say whether they are phrases or clauses

1. The scary witch was flying over my house. Phrase / clause
2. To die dancing is to die happy. Phrase / clause

- Circle the correct form of the word in brackets.

1. Mrs Jacobs is (there/their/they're) grandmother.
2. I put my book over (there, their, they're).

TRUE - FALSE

- True or False

Say if each of the following statements is true or false.

E.g. The Britons did not have a very strong army during the first 1000 years A.D.

Figure 3.6

Road primary administered 12 (5%) multiple choice and true-false items. These items assessed recall of information. Multiple choice stems consisted of direct form, were stated positively with three to four options. True-false items were made of statements and provided two options. Answering revealed that strong and average learners performed fairly well though some of them failed to follow instructions appropriately. For example; instead of circling the letter or the number of the correct answer, they would circle both the letter and the answer or the answer only. Weak learners struggled to make the correct choices and tended to select more than one option.

Marking revealed that teachers did not consider adherence to instructions. They simply ticked off correct answers and crossed out wrong ones.

Zamuli Primary

Examples of multiple choice items

- Which heading do you think is the most suitable for the story?
 - A. A great athlete
 - B. Overcoming obstacles
 - C. The story of Jackie Joyner-Kerse

- What word is a synonym for end?
 - A. skip
 - B. stop
 - C. leave

- Where is Clearing located? _____
 - In Great Britain.
 - In the USA.
 - In Spain

- There is an increase in _____
 - The number of crime done by adults
 - The number of prisons
 - The number of crime done by young people
- True or False
 - E.g. Read the text and answer the following question.
 - This will cost less money. _____

- Young people cannot be tried in court in most U.S. states. _____
 - False
 - True

- Parents are not responsible for what their children do. _____
 - True
 - False

Figure 3.7

The Zamuli Primary School teacher used 66 (25%) multiple choice and true-false items throughout the year. These items measured recall of information. The stems consisted of either questions or statements, and mainly made use of three options. Answering showed that all three categories performed fairly well though some weak learners performed quite badly.

Marking revealed that the teacher ticked off correct answers and crossed incorrect ones.

Kusala Primary

The teacher from Kusala Primary did not administer any multiple choice or true-false items.

3.3.3 Matching Items

North Beach Primary

An example of a matching item

E.g. August is the month for women. Let's honor our women of the past by reading the extract 'Women Rule' and answer the following questions.

- Match these terms with the correct woman.

- | | |
|------------|-------|
| a) Slave | _____ |
| b) China | _____ |
| c) Author | _____ |
| d) Culture | _____ |
| e) Army | _____ |

Figure 3.8

Teachers from North Beach Primary managed five (2%) matching items. Items seemed to adhere to good construction principles except one. It failed to give adequate and specific instructions in terms of where learners were to find answers. The item also consisted only of the premise column without the response one. All items tended to measure factual knowledge.

In terms of answering, matching items offered some challenge to the weak learners, however, strong and average learners performed very well.

For marking, teachers ticked off correct answers and crossed out incorrect ones.

Road Primary

An example of a matching item

- Match the sentence on the left with the simile on the right.		
1. ____	That person never tells the truth.	A. She is as blind as a bat
2. ____	She has very poor eyesight	B. He sits there like a bump on a log.
3. ____	The boy is very lazy.	C. He or she lies like a rug.

Figure 3.9

Road Primary administered one matching item. The item had no introductory statement. Strong and average learners answered it correctly while weak ones failed it. The marking happened in the same manner as all other item types.

Zamuli Primary

An example of a matching item

- Here are the four definitions that describe the nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Match the part of the speech with its definition in the following columns.		
E.g.	List A	List B
	1) It is the name of a person, place or thing.	Noun
	2) It describes a person, place, or thing.	Adjective

Figure 3.10

Zamuli primary used one (0, 39%) matching item. The item did not adhere to the construction requirements. It presented two premises and two alternatives only. All three categories answered it correctly. Marking was done by a tick off.

Kusala Primary

The teacher from Kusala Primary did not use any matching item.

3.4 Conclusion

Chapter 3 described and analysed what constituted teachers' assessment using short answer response and objective items. Results showed that short answer response items were the most used followed by a few multiple choice items. Matching items were the least used. Teachers struggled to diversify items phraseology and most measured explicitly stated information. The North Beach and the Road primary assessed reading comprehension more than grammar

while assessment of grammar was dominant in Zamuli and Kusala primary. Items of reading comprehension assessment failed to take into account the different reading purposes. Vocabulary was not assessed according to the context of the words in the texts, learners were asked to simply find definitions in the dictionary. Assessment of grammar focused on analysed knowledge rather than on both analysed and metalinguistic. Most learners performed better in assessment of comprehension and struggled in grammar, and most struggled to spell correctly.

CHAPTER 4: EXTENDED WRITING ASSESSMENT

4.1 Introduction

The chapter seeks to examine and provide a description of what constituted assessment of extended writing in the different case study schools as well as the manner in which teachers marked it. This will be achieved through analysis of the quality of activities' instructions, and assessment criteria as well as analysis of work done by learners. Data were obtained through the collection of learners' extended writing work and teachers' rubrics.

4.2 Literature Review of Extended Writing

Fleming and Chambers (1983: 30) refer to extended writing activities as "those that require logical organized and extended responses." Contrary to Short Answer response activities, extended writing was not done under strict regulations in terms of supervision. It was a process whereby learners were given the topic a week or so before the due date and were even encouraged to seek outside help.

Writing, according to Glasswell et al (2001: 2) "is a purposeful social interaction that can function to accomplish certain social goals." As a result, the features of texts that learners are to produce should be related to the purpose and context of writing. Quellmalz and Burry (1983: 1) and Glasswell et al (2001: 3) identified two different kinds of writing modes including expository and narrative modes. A narrative mode relates a sequence of events that occur over time. Both what happens and the order in which the events occur are communicated. Expository writing describes, explains analyses or gives information. Both serve the following functions or purposes namely:

- To explain;
- To argue or persuade
- To instruct or lay out a procedure
- To classify, organise, describe, and report information;
- To inform or entertain through imaginative narrative and
- To inform or entertain through recount.

When giving an essay task, learners should be provided with clear writing prompts containing explicit directions to help them plan and develop their essay. These directions should include the specific function or purpose for writing, a specific audience to whom the learner will

write for, a specific topic or subject to write about, the length of the text they are to produce and explicit detailed criteria that will be used to judge the essay, commonly referred to as rubric (Quellmalz and Burry: 1985). Different approaches and forms essays activities should be used. Approaches may include analyses, narrations, reflections, descriptions, summaries, evaluations, syntheses, etc. Forms of writing could consist of stories, articles, letters, editorials, reports, advertisements, speeches, interviews, etc. (NAEP: 2011).

The most successful writers, argue the authors of NEAP (2011), are those who develop and organize ideas logically and coherently, and use language effectively to support the communication purpose. Writing, therefore, should be evaluated for effectiveness of the writer's ability to develop and organize ideas, to use language and convention in relation to the purpose and audience (NAEP 2011: 19).

Development concerns the way in which the writer expands on or builds the topic, and whether or not it is consistent with the intended function. Organization points to the flow or sequencing of ideas, language resources for achieving purpose and whether there is an introduction, body and a conclusion. Language use and convention deal with grammatical conventions such as words and sentences, spelling, punctuation, etc. (Quellmalz and Burry 1983: 15). A scoring rubric is used as an evaluative tool. (Refer to Appendices I for rubrics and assessment criteria).

4.3 Description and Analysis of Extended Writing Assessment

4.3.1 North Beach Primary

The North Beach Primary conducted four extended writings exercises. They include:

- Who am I?
- Letter to Agony Aunt
- Letter to Concerned Mum
- News Article for the front page

INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions included:

1. Who am I?

ASs: 6.4.1; 6.4.2; 6.4.3; 6.4.4

Write creative story with the title “Who am I?” Your story must have 15 to 20 sentences and must be written in three (3) to five (5) paragraphs. You must follow the writing process: brainstorm, mind-map, first draft, edit final draft. Present your work using legible and neat handwriting. Consult a dictionary to help you with the spelling of difficult words.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Write a story of three paragraphs.
- Complete the mind-map which should consist of key words and ideas relating to your story.
- Use the mind-map to help you write your first draft of the story.
- Use full sentences and the correct punctuation mark.
- Follow a logical sequence.
- Be creative.

2. News article for the front page

ASs: 6.4.1; 6.4.2; 6.4.3; 6.4.4

INSTRUCTIONS

- Write the name of the newspaper at the top of the sheet of paper. Remember to use the name of your school as part of the name of the newspaper. Remember to write the name of the newspaper clearly and big.
- Write the headline, or the name of your report or article. Make it interesting!
- Plan what you want to say. Think about: Where the event took place, when it took place, what happened, who was involved.
- Make a rough design of your report, plan where you put the pictures and write a

suitable caption.

- Write your report in the past tense. Use old newspaper to give you an idea of how a news report is written. You should have at 4 or 5 paragraphs.
- Don't forget to write your name at the end of the article.

3. Letters to agony Aunt and to Concerned Mum.

ASs: 6.4.2; 6.4.5

INSTRUCTIONS

Find a magazine that carries an advice page or has an agony aunt/uncle. Use it as an example in order to write your own letters to agony aunt and to a concerned mum.

Figure 4.1

Analysis of extended writing activities demonstrates that topics included both expository and narrative modes as they involved describing and informing. Teachers provided instructions and assessment criteria. However, in most cases instructions did not make explicit what the purpose and who the audience were. For example; in the “News Paper article” activity, the teacher did not determine what report learners were to write.

The rubrics that teachers used as a marking tool contained virtually similar criteria and had descriptors that failed to spell out what was expected at each level of performance. Activities used only three forms of writing and one approach. The forms of writing included two letters, one news article and a story and all used an informational approach.

Marking placed more emphasis on spelling and grammar to the detriment of the development and organization of ideas. (Refer to Appendices II and III for good and poor extended writing respectively). They also looked at whether or not the writing adhered to most instructions, and met the criteria.

With regard to levels of English; Strong learners tried to produce work that closely adhered to instructions and met assessment criteria. They produced texts that made sense. At the word level work; they wrote with a few spelling mistakes, they had a good, legible handwriting and

possessed an advanced vocabulary extension that allowed them to clearly construct their arguments. The sentence level work revealed that they mainly used simple sentences; however, there were instances when they also used very long sentences with only one action word. For punctuation; they mainly used full stops, capital letters and commas. At the text level work, they wrote in paragraphs and provided an introduction, a body and a conclusion. They stayed on the topic and seemed to recognize how arguments were constructed through a logical flow of ideas.

Average learners also tried to produce acceptable work; however, the word level strand revealed a good number of spelling mistakes with restricted vocabulary. Some had a good handwriting and some others did not. The sentence level strand revealed the use of simple sentences with inconsistent use of punctuation and other aspects of grammar. At the text level strand, they wrote in paragraphs but failed to remain consistent and to maintain a logical flow of ideas.

Weak learners failed to produce good work. They wrote with spelling mistakes and had a restricted vocabulary which impeded their ability to construct a good argument. Some of them had a neat and legible handwriting and some others did not. At the sentence level work, they used simple sentences with poor grammatical awareness, and they were inconsistent in the use of punctuation. The text level work indicated that; they tried to write in paragraphs, however, these paragraphs were mixed up and lacked depth. Paragraphs also failed to remain consistent and to maintain a logical flow of ideas.

Marking was done as follows:

- They underlined incorrect spelling without writing the correct one.
- They used this sign ^ to indicate a missing word.
- Capital letters were written on small letters where necessary.
- They ruled a line on words that are not supposed to be part of a sentence.
- They used a tick mark (✓) to indicate a good paragraph
- They praised a good essay with comments such as; “what a lovely work, wow, what a lovely piece of writing, keep it up” and make no comment on a poor one.

4.3.2 Road Primary

Road Primary learners produced six pieces of extended writing. They included;

- My biography
- Call back the past
- Dolphins: teacher
- My June holiday
- Letter to a friend
- Telling the story in pictures

1. MY BIBLIOGRAPHY: No instructions could be found.

2. CALL BACK THE PAST

- INSTRUCTIONS

- Choose someone to interview: find a person who is at least 50 years old and willing to be interviewed by you.
- Write questions: write at least 5 different questions that can only be answered in full sentences which will help you find out about how that person's childhood and life in general was different to yours.
- When you have completed your interview, write your report on a lined page.
- Include this sentence at the beginning of your project: I interviewed _____ who is _____ years old. He/she is my _____ and lives at _____.
- Set your work out like this:
- Write your first question in color and underline it.
- Write the response/story underneath it.
- Write in direct speech, in other words, the actual words the person said.

3. DOLPHINS

- Write your story according to the following plan;

Paragraph 1

Dolphins are interesting creatures. Tell of some of the tricks they do in aquariums and in the wild. Which of these do you find most interesting and fascinating? Why do you think dolphins behave like this?

Paragraph 2

What are your feelings about dolphins in captivity? Do you think they are happy? Are they safer than in the wild? Why is it necessary to have some dolphins in captivity? How does man make use of their talents? How do you feel about this?

Paragraph 3

Do you think it is possible to re-introduce dolphins to the wild, to set them free? What are some of the problems? How do you think these can be overcome? Think along the lines of dolphins' pods or schools.

Paragraph 4

Give some ideas how we can preserve (care for) these wonderful creatures for your children and grandchildren to enjoy one day. It would be very sad if the only dolphins they saw were pictures.

4. MY JUNE HOLIDAY: No instructions could be found.

5. Letter to a friend

Instructions: Write to a friend about Cecilia.

6. TELLING THE STORY IN PICTURES

Create a story board for two faithful friends using only 6 pictures and captions to tell the story.

Figure 4.2

Teachers made use of expository and narrative modes. In most cases teachers provided instructions and assessment criteria but failed to indicate the audience the writing was intended for. However, except "Call back the past and Dolphins", which had explicit

instructions; other activities either failed to give or provided inadequate or ambiguous instructions. Most rubrics had levels of performance with descriptors that failed to spell out what the learners were expected to achieve. These rubrics did not explain how the teacher had arrived at a particular grade. It is also observed that teachers did not use a variety of approaches and forms in their activities.

Marking and rubrics revealed that judgement of a good or a poor essay was more about grammar and adherence or non-adherence to instructions and assessment criteria to the detriment of the development and organization of ideas. This poses some problems as most activities either did not have or had inadequate instructions and descriptors at their levels of performance.

As regards levels of English, observations demonstrated that most learners across categories struggled to produce quality organized and extended work.

Strong learners tended to write with a limited number of spelling mistakes and had a good handwriting. They, however, possessed limited vocabulary which impeded their ability to write in a clear and concise manner. The sentence level strand demonstrated a preference to use simple sentences while they tentatively included complex sentences. While simple sentences contained structural mistakes, complex sentences were mostly grammatically incorrect. The use of punctuation was limited to full stops, commas and capital letters. At the text level strand, they wrote in paragraphs but the content lacked depth, clarity and originality.

Average learners wrote with a large number of spelling mistakes. Some had good handwriting and some others did not. They also had a very limited vocabulary. The sentence level work demonstrated that learners used simple sentences. They mainly used full stops and capital letters for punctuation, and they had poor grammatical awareness. The text level strand revealed that they tried to write in paragraphs but there was no logical flow of ideas, and lack of content depth. They also failed to construct their argument in a clear and original manner.

Weak learners' wrote very poorly. The word level work was full of spelling mistakes. They struggled to write legibly and possessed very limited vocabulary. At the sentence level work;

they had a very poor grammatical awareness which resulted in their failure to construct correct simple sentences. They used punctuation – which was mainly full stop – indiscriminately. At the text level, they wrote in paragraphs, however, these paragraphs did not capture the essence of the task. Their content was meaningless and lacking.

When they marked, teacher 1 drew a line over a word that should not have been written, used this sign ^ to indicate a word left out and inserted it. She drew a circle for incorrect punctuation or punctuation left out. She placed this [] to indicate the start of a new paragraph. She also underlined mistakes and at the same time did corrections (writing the correct word or inserting the correct punctuation). The teacher did not write comments irrespective of the quality of the work. Teacher 2 did not use symbols; he ruled lines over words that did not make sense, underlined mistakes and did corrections.

4.3.3 Kusala Primary

Kusala Primary conducted two extended writings. They included:

- “Write a reply to this letter”
- “Continue Vanessa’s journal by writing entries for three more days.”

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. “Write a reply to this letter”<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Instructions: No further instructions could be found.- Assessment criteria: assessment criteria were not provided2. “Continue Vanessa’s journal by writing entries for three more days”<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Instructions: You could include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vanessa’s new home, going to school and seeing old friends.- You must write 6 sentences.- Remember to use correct punctuation and grammar.- Assessment Criteria: assessment criteria were not provided. |
|--|

Figure 4.3

An attempt to assess an expository mode has been made; however, Activities were not adequately constructed and failed to provide explicit instructions likely to guide learners’ responses.

A good letter was one with a correct layout and in which the learner made limited language and spelling mistakes. The letter had been written in paragraphs, the content had to be original and comprehensible. For a good journal, the learner had to make at least two entries with limited language mistakes.

Considered as a poor letter was one with an incorrect layout, reproduced the original letter, lacked in addressing key elements in the reply as well as one in which the learner made a lot of language mistakes. A poor journal failed to make at least 2 entries, did not follow instructions and contained multiple language mistakes.

Levels of English demonstrated that; at the word level work strong learners produced texts which contained a very limited number of spelling mistakes, they wrote neatly and legibly but possessed a limited vocabulary and therefore could not clearly construct their argument. The sentence level work revealed that they produced simple but sometimes complex compound sentences. It also shows that they had a limited grammatical awareness such as inconsistent use of full stops and commas. The text level strand shows that strong learners wrote in paragraphs, were a bit consistent in the manner in which they developed ideas, and their writing made sense.

Average learners also performed a bit well at the word level work but made spelling mistakes. They wrote neatly and legibly but possessed a limited vocabulary. With the sentence level work, they used simple sentences but struggled with sentences structures. They also had a limited grammatical awareness. The text level work shows that they wrote in paragraphs but with limited content and/or ideas.

Weak learners' work seemed to be very poor. The word level strand reveals multiple spelling mistakes with very limited vocabulary. Some learners had a good handwriting and some others did not. The sentence level work shows that they used simple sentences but filled with grammatical mistakes and incoherent sentences structures. The text level work demonstrated that they struggled to write in paragraphs and their ideas were incoherent.

Marking was done arbitrary as no assessment criteria were provided. Comments such as very good or good could be observed and no comments for those learners who did not meet the teacher's "requirements".

4.3.4 Zamuli Primary

Zamuli Primary provided No evidence of extended writing activities.

4.4 Conclusion

Extended writing assessment was challenging and was done in three schools only. Zamuli failed to produce any evidence of extended writing activities. North Beach and The Road primary managed four and six pieces respectively. Assessment had inadequate instructions and unsuitable rubrics. Teachers struggled to use a variety of strategies, forms and methods. Kusala managed two pieces which were poorly set, had inadequate instructions and without a marking tool.

Marking across schools was evaluative as it failed to give developmental comments. It focused more on language and spelling to the detriment of the development and organization of ideas. Most learners struggled to produce good essays.

CHAPTER 5: ORAL WORK

The chapter seeks to describe and analyse what constituted oral assessment in the case study schools

5.1 Introduction

The RNCS (Department of Education: 2002) included listening and speaking referred to here as oral communication as components of the English language learning outcomes that needed to be covered at the primary school level and in the intermediate phase in particular. For the purpose of this study, oral activities also included reading fluency as it was also assessed orally in schools. The chapter consists of three main parts including a survey of oral communication and reading fluency, and a description and analysis of activities.

5.2 Literature Review of Oral Communication

Brown et al (1981:9) posit that any child who develops normally will demonstrate listening and speaking skills when he/she enters Grade R because the child can talk and if asked a question, the child answers indicating that the child can listen as well. However; the fact that all learners come to school with basic speaking and listening skills which seem to develop as they grow older does not necessarily imply that all of them are effective communicators (Brown et al: 1981). The teacher's job is not to teach the child to talk and to simply listen as this was learned at home. The teacher's job, according to them, is "to help each learner, regardless of his or her stage of language development, communicate more effectively, honestly, and appropriately, in ways that benefit both the learner and the listener" (p: 9).

Larson's in Reed (1983: 9) refers to oral communication competence as "the ability to demonstrate knowledge of the communicative behaviour socially appropriate in a given situation". Its proficiency contributes to social adjustment, full psychological development and satisfying interpersonal relationships resulting in positive self-concept (Rubin & Mead 1984: 8).

5.2.1 Listening and Speaking

Brown et al (1983: 11) argue that "oral communication is not a single skill." In other words, listening and speaking is the result of the development of different but interrelated skills.

Listening

Listening involves letting the other person know that you are listening to what he or she is saying (Brown et al: 1983). This can be done by acknowledgement such as a nod of head or a simple uh huh. Using of body language and other signs to indicate that you are paying attention. Ask questions, reflect and paraphrase to ensure that you understand the message. Manktelow and Carlson (2012) argue that a good listener will listen not only to what is being said, but also to what is implied. This involves observing body language to discover inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal messages. When listening, Manktelow and Carlson (2012) further argue:

- do not talk or interrupt. It's only when he or she has finished that you may clarify to ensure that you have received the message.
- focus on the speaker, remove distractions and concentrate on the message by putting other things out of mind.
- be patient. A pause or a long pause does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished.
- avoid personal prejudice by not becoming irritated or by letting the speaker's habits or mannerisms distract you from what he or she is saying.

Speaking

According to Brown et al (1981: 23), a number of interrelated skills are involved in order for learners to speak effectively. These may include:

- organization: it refers to how a message is arranged or structured and it is concerned with sequence and relationships among ideas in a message. For example; using words in an order that clearly expresses thought; organizing main ideas for presentation; stating main idea clearly; identifying and understanding main ideas; etc.
- Content: it is the topic or the subject matter of talk. It includes the amount and relevance of information and adaptation of information to the situation. For example; using words or phrases appropriate to the situation; supporting main ideas with important details; understanding speaker's purpose; summarizing information and drawing conclusions; associate important details with main ideas; etc.

- Language: it is concerned with grammar and choice of words. For example; demonstrate knowledge of Standard English usage; recognize words and phrases used by speakers; etc.
- Delivery: it focuses on skills of volume, rate, and distinctiveness of speech. For example; speak loudly enough to be heard by a listener or a group of listeners; speak at a rate the listener can understand; say words distinctly; indicate why the speaker can or cannot be understood; etc.
- Function: it refers to the purpose of communication and may include persuading, experiencing, describing and giving instructions. For example; use survival words to cope with emergency situations; ask for and give information; Describe objects, events, experiences etc. Understand and respond to survival words used in emergency situations; follow directions; understand descriptions of events and experiences, etc.

Some of the skills needed to listen and speak effectively may include: choosing words that express meaning clearly; to speak with clear enunciation and articulation, use appropriate gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact; adjust volume, speed, pitch and inflection of voice appropriately; adapt to different audiences; etc. The variety of skills needed for effective speaking and listening illustrates that oral communication involves more than knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. These skills may be categorized as verbal language, non-verbal behaviour and situational sensitivity (Brown et al: 1981).

Verbal language refers to the production and understanding of units of sound called phonemes, the acquisition of syntax as well as learning the meaning of words or semantics.

Non-verbal behaviour involves body language such as facial expression, gesture, visual interaction etc.; vocal features such as pitch, tempo, pause and quality of voice; proximity such as space and distance. Sensitivity to the situation refers to being aware of the particularity of the situation, the people involved, the purpose of the communication as well as the time and place (Brown et al 1981: 11).

5.2.2 Reading Fluency

Introduction

“Fluency measures can be used not only to identify students who appear to be having substantial difficulties in learning to read but also to assess effectiveness of instruction and /or interventions used to promote progress in reading” (Schilling et al 2007: 431). This means that oral reading fluency can be used as a measure of overall reading proficiency and learning, particularly in primary school.

Definition of Reading Fluency

Rasinski (2004: 2) and Fuchs et al (2009: 242) refer to reading fluency as “the accurate and automatic decoding of words in the text, along with expressive phrasing and/or interpretation of the text to achieve optimal comprehension”. Accuracy in speech implies knowing what the words are and what they mean. Relevant speed or rate means recognizing words rapidly; and appropriate prosody or phrasing and expression signifies putting the feeling, emotion, or emphasis on the right word or phrase.

The ability to read text effortlessly, quickly, accurately and with expression plays an essential role in becoming a competent reader (Hasbrouk & Tindal 2006: 643). According to Good et al (2001) and Therrien & Kubina (2007) as oral reading fluency increases, the learner allocates less cognitive resources to the process of decoding, construct meaning for reading comprehension and develop academic proficiency in foundational reading skills.

With the progression of each grade level, the nature and difficulty of texts increases and the reader must establish new fluency in unfamiliar readings (Waldron 2008: 24). Rasinski & Padak (2005: 34) argue that it is necessary to model and develop the nature of reading within grade level continuum through which a learner can observe and integrates the behaviours and skills of fluent readers within and throughout the context of reading. They also argue that oral reading fluency instruction should form part of a literacy programme.

Furthermore, Samuels in Waldron (2008) argues that learners should repeat reading of short and meaningful passages several times until satisfactory level of fluency is reached. This instructional procedure should be repeated with a new passage each time the learner has accomplished satisfactory fluency with a previous passage. Waldron (2008: 25) adds that,

“repeated reading improves oral reading fluency not only in learners within the regular education programme, but also with learners who are identified with learning disability. Through the rereading of a particular passage, a learner improves fluency in word recognition and phrasing while building comprehension of the whole passage. It also creates a transfer effect of linguistic knowledge from one repeated reading to the next reading, building upon foundational reading skills and improving fluency”.

A scoring rubric is normally used as an evaluative tool.

5.3 Description and Analysis of Oral Work

The section below will describe and analyse teachers’ oral assessment according to activities instructions, assessment criteria and rubrics (refer to Appendix I for rubrics and assessment criteria).

5.3.1 North Beach Primary

Listening

One Listening comprehension activity was conducted.

Speaking

Three Speaking activities have been conducted. They include:

- Who am I?
- Crime Scene Investigation
- Poem recital

Learners had to prepare a presentation for “Who am I” and “Crime Scene Investigation”. For the poem recital, learners were asked to find a poem of their choice which they had to recite in front of the class. The instructions, tips and assessment criteria below were provided in respect of the three activities.

1.WHO AM I

LO2. AS: 6.2.1.; 6.2.3.; 6.2.4.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- You must talk at least about 10 different things related to you.
- Use A3 poster paper/cardboard to make a collage.
- For each thing you speak about, you must have a picture on the collage i.e. you should have 10 pictures. For example, if you speak about your brothers and sisters have a picture of your family and show us your family members.
- The pictures are your cue or memory call. You must use your collage in your oral.
- On your collage you can stick photographs, pictures from magazines, drawings, etc.

TIPS (some ideas and topics you can speak about in your oral are):

- Your likes and dislikes
- What makes you happy
- What makes you sad/unhappy
- Your hobbies and sports that you are involved in
- Your family (e.g. who are your family members?)
- Your friends
- Where you live
- Your pets
- Things you enjoy doing at home
- Things you enjoy doing at school
- Holidays that you have been on
- Your dreams/plans/goals for the future.

I enjoyed

Next time I will

2.CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION

LO2. AS: 6.2.1.; 6.2.2.; 6.2.3.; 6.2.4.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- You are a crime scene investigator, and your code name is Sherlock. You have been called upon to solve a mysterious robbery that happened at Ann Morton's mansion.
- As soon as you have solved the crime, you have to prepare an unprepared speech and report back to the newspaper reporters, giving logical reasons how the

<p>robbery took place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You will be given a couple of minutes to investigate and comb the area (observe picture). - Once you have solved the crime scene, you will be given two minutes to report back your findings. <p>TIPS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time of robbery. - What season? - Clothing of robber. - Description of robber. - How did robbery take place? <p>3. POETRY RECITAL</p> <p>LO2. AS: 1.</p> <p>INSTRUCTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find an interesting poem (funny, serious, with a moral, etc.) that has at least 20 lines (\pm 3 stanzas). - Once you've decided on a poem, copy the poem and paste it on a sheet of cardboard with your name and grade clearly at the top. - Learn the poem. - Present/Recite it to the rest of the class.
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Figure 5.1

Reading Fluency

North Beach Primary provided evidence of one prepared reading and another one for unprepared reading activities. With a prepared reading activity, learners were informed about the activity, the text they had to be assessed on, and were provided with assessment criteria. Conversely, with an unprepared reading activity learners were not aware of the text they had to be assessed on though they were informed and provided with assessment criteria.

PREPARED READING ACTIVITY: Title: “Media”. This is a group activity.
LO3. AS: 8.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide into groups of 3 or 4.
2. Allocate each person a number in your group. Example 1, 2, 3, 4.
3. Number 1 in your group will do local news.
4. Number 2 will do international news. However, if there are no international news, then 1 local and 1 business or 1 local and 1 international.
5. Number 3 will do 1 local news and 1 political news.
6. Number 4 will do sport news.
7. Each person in the group has to;
 - read
 - summarise
 - report back on 2 newspaper articles.
8. After reading your articles, find out what messages they are trying to bring across to the public. (Main idea).
9. What is the article all about?
10. Find at least 2 sentences or statements that best describes your articles and write it down.
11. Report back to your group and explain what your 2 articles are all about.
12. Read at least 2 sentences to them that best describe your 2 articles.
13. Share with your group how these articles that you have chosen, has made you feel. (How does the article/story make you feel).
14. When your group is ready, tell the class about 1 of your articles, read 1 sentence that best describes your article and how it affects you emotionally (feelings about article).

UNPREPARED READING: Title: “All Dressed Up and Ready to Go...”
LO3. AS: No assessment standards were provided for this activity.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read the following text to yourself at least 3 times.
2. Now read the text to the rest of the class

Figure 5.2

Analysis of Oral Work

Listening

It was found that one listening comprehension activity was conducted in which learners had to demonstrate their skills related to obtaining and recalling of information. The activity was based on the text entitled “The Mary Celeste”. In this activity, learners were provided with an assessment paper with short answer response questions. Methodologically; the teacher read the text while learners listened attentively. Thereafter learners were given permission to write

answers related to what they have heard. The activity was marked according to principles governing short response answer activities.

As a result of conducting only one activity, the teacher could not evaluate the learners' mastery of other listening skills where, for example, learners could engage in conversations and make use of listening techniques such as paying attention, use of verbal and non-verbal language, paraphrasing, clarifying, etc.

Speaking

It is observed that activities were constructed adequately. Teachers provided clear and specific instructions. However, learners were not exposed to speaking activities involving a range of skills. The three activities covered only two functions, namely informing and entertaining.

Marking showed that- rubrics were used. However, teachers had difficulties to draw up adequate rubrics. One rubric did not provide levels of performance while another did not define its levels of performance or did not spell out its descriptors. As result marking could be described to have been done arbitrary for two activities.

Reading

Instructions and assessment criteria of the Media demonstrated that the activity was more about speaking rather than about reading. As a result, it did not assess what it meant to assess. The rubric failed to provide levels of performance which means that, the marking was done arbitrary. Analysis of the unprepared reading activity revealed that the activity was appropriately constructed. The rubric that was used for the marking was also adequately constructed though it failed to assess whether or not learners read at an appropriate rate.

5.3.2 Road Primary

Listening

There is evidence of one listening comprehension activity done as a short response answer activity and conducted by teacher one. The activity was peer marked and used for formative purposes. (Please refer to Appendix IV for more information on the teachers' use of formative assessment).

Speaking

The following speaking and reading activities were conducted. They included;

a. History of Medicine

b. Call back the Past

c. Telling the Class about Me

TELLING THE CLASS ABOUT ME

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Tell your teacher and your classmates more about yourself. Your oral must be about $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 minutes long. When preparing your oral:
- Use headings from your personal profile to make keyword cards. (Use key words only, don't write out whole sentences) Add extra detail not included in your profile.
- Make sure your oral has an interesting introduction (to attract your listeners attention) and a good ending.
- When you practise your oral try to:
 1. Speak in an interesting way, pausing in the right places, and varying (changing) your expression and tone (the way you use your voice).
 2. Include the whole audience in your eye contact.
 3. A good tip: Practise in front of a mirror.

2. HISTORY OF MEDICINE

INSTRUCTIONS:

During your research into the History of medicine, you learnt about the different medical figures who either discovered cures or who made a difference in the lives of sick people. Choose your favorite medical figure and tell the class about his or her contribution to medicine. Look through the rubric to see which criteria you will be assessed on.

3. CALL BACK THE PAST

This activity is linked to the essay about interviewing a senior citizen.

INSTRUCTIONS

Choose two of your questions, perhaps the most interesting, and report back to the class about what your senior citizen told you. You may act or dress up to make it more interesting for us.

Figure 5.3

Reading Fluency

Evidence of four reading activities rubrics with the same assessment criteria and instructions were provided.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- This is a prepared assessment and it all about presentation.

Figure 5.4

Analysis

Speaking

Analysis of the three speaking activities revealed that “Telling the class about me” and “Call back the past” contained clear and explicit instructions while “The history of medicine’s” instructions were not clear and explicit enough. They did not adequately guide the learners as to what was expected to do. In terms of marking, rubrics were provided for the three activities, however, they contained flaws.

The “History of medicine” rubric provided and defined levels of performance but left out other skills necessary to enhance effective speaking communication. The two remaining activities failed to provide levels of performance and spell out descriptors.

Reading

Analysis of the activities showed that teachers failed to provide instructions. Learners were offered no guidance as to what was expected of them. The same rubric including the same skills was used repeatedly as an assessment tool for all these activities.

5.3.3 Zamuli and Kusala Primary Schools

Books and assessment papers from these two schools did not provide any evidence of listening, speaking or reading fluency activities.

5.4 Conclusion

Assessment of oral was also challenging. It was only done by North Beach and The Road Primary. North Beach Primary was the only school to have covered all three aspects while The Road managed speaking and reading activities. Assessment failed to use a variety of methods and strategies and provided inadequate rubrics.

CHAPTER 6: EXTENT TO WHICH TEACHERS’ ASSESSMENT PRACTICES MATCHED CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to determine the extent to which teachers’ assessment in different schools’ categories were compatible with curriculum requirements. To inform this effort, a description of curriculum assessment policy documents, two Grade Six English textbooks, individual school assessment policy as well as teachers own professional judgement will be carried out. Subsequent to the above will follow the analysis of teachers’ assessment in order to determine the match with curriculum requirements.

6.2 Description of Curriculum Assessment Requirements

6.2.1 Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)

The RNCS (Department of Education 2002: 125-132), which was the primary source for support and direction for pedagogic processes, provided a holistic framework that sought to guide and inform the implementation of the curriculum including that of assessment practices in the classroom. The framework was articulated through four aspects. They included outcomes-based education, principles and purposes of assessment, and feedback. It provided for OBE principles as the basis for assessment, and it outlined learning outcomes (LOs) and their associated assessment standards (ASs). It allowed for assessment to integrate a number of LOs and emphasized that learners’ performance had to be measured against ASs. It identified six LOs for English Home Language and English First Additional Language.

Analysis of the RNCS revealed that, there were many ASs. This impacted on the teachers’ ability to comprehensibly assess all of them or to make informed choices on those on which priority had to be given to. It appeared that these ASs were not developed according to some established criteria but had been selected randomly. As a result, some of them were clear, easy and straightforward to unpack and do while some others were nebulous, generic, too ambitious, unrealistic and therefore difficult or impossible to understand, unpack and do.

Those that were clear and straightforward were written in a language that was accessible and focused on the results of learning that could be readily observed or tested. In practice, this means that these ASs placed emphasis on concrete performances, such as “explain, identify, evaluate, analyse, etc.” For example, LO3.8; “understand and use information texts appropriately” such as summarising main ideas, LO6.1; “works with words” etc. On the other hand, those that were nebulous or vague and unrealistic were those where measurability was a concern. They were challenging or difficult to assess or do due to their imprecision and level of generality. These ASs were open to wide differences in interpretation since teachers were left with insufficient direction or guidance. For instance; LO1.1; “enjoys listening and responds critically to different kinds of oral texts”, LO2.1; “communicate experiences, more complex ideas and information in more challenging contexts, for different audiences and purposes”, etc. These behaviours could not or could be difficult to measure. Consequently, teachers found it easy to teach for some ASs and difficult or impossible to teach for some others.

Examples of clear/straightforward ASs could include:

LO1: Listening: the learner will be able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations. It has seven ASs of which three could be deemed clear and straightforward. E.g. AS2: “identifies themes, asks questions, and relates ideas to own life experiences”; AS3: “identifies and discusses key features such as context, speaker’s body language, content, register, and choice of words and AS5: “listens for information in a variety of oral texts, summarises main ideas, and notes specific details”. These ASs were explicitly formulated.

LO2 Speaking: the learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in a wide range of situations.

Speaking numbered four ASs which were easy to do and straightforward.

LO3 Reading and Viewing: The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts. It had ten ASs. Seven ASs could be deemed easy and straightforward to teach towards.

E.g. AS1; “reads and responds critically to a variety of South African and international fiction and non-fiction”; AS5: “shows understanding of the text, its relationship to own life, its purpose and how it functions”; etc.

LO4. Writing: The learner will be able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes.

Writing was made up of seven ASs. These ASs were clear and straightforward, except for AS7 “processes information” which was implicit, confusing and a bit above the developmental level of Grade 6 learners. For example; it would have been quite difficult for a Grade Six teacher to teach for AS7.1 “categorises and classifies information and can explain what these processes entail, giving examples from different Learning Areas” or AS7.2; “compares and contrasts information and ideas and indicates the basis for the comparison”. These were highly complex cognitive operations which were too ambitious and unrealistic for the Grade Six level.

LO6 Language structure and Use: the learner will know and be able to use the sounds, words and grammar of the language to create and interpret texts.

It counted six ASs deemed clear, straightforward and easy to do. They explicitly stated the knowledge and skills that teachers and learners needed to teach, demonstrate and do. For example; AS1 “works with words”, AS2 “works with sentences”, AS3 “works with texts”, etc.

Examples of nebulous/vague ASs could include:

LO1

AS1: “enjoys listening and responds critically to different kinds of oral texts”; AS4: “comments on sound and visual effects”; AS6: listens actively and with sensitivity, acknowledges opinion that conflict with own and responds appropriately in the context” and AS7: “discusses social, moral and cultural values in different texts and comments on how these are conveyed in the text”.

LO3

Three were too general and nebulous. These ASs did not make specific the skills that the learners had demonstrate. They included AS4: “discusses how the techniques used by the

writers, graphic designers and photographers construct particular views of the world and position the reader in various ways”; AS6: “identifies and critically discusses cultural and social values in texts”; and AS10: “selects relevant texts for personal and information needs from a wide variety of sources such as in the local community and via electronic media”. AS10 depends largely on the interest of the learner which the teacher may have no control over.

LO5 Thinking and Reasoning: The learner will be able to use language to think and reason, as well as to access, process and use information for learning.

There were four ASs for Thinking and Reasoning. Their titles seemed clear and straightforward; however, analysis of some bullets reveals that these ASs were nebulous, ambitious and unrealistic for Grade Six learners. For example; AS1.3 “develop a balanced argument on relevant and challenging issues”, AS1.5 “questions validity and the effect of context and author’s position”, AS2.3 “discusses the validity of information by comparison with other sources”, AS3.2 “compares and contrasts information and ideas and indicates the basis for the comparison”, etc.

To aid the achievement of ASs, the RNCS recommended a number of texts that teachers had to make use of though the list is not exhaustive. These texts included (Department of Education 2002: 61-62):

Oral: discussions, meetings, debates, stories, plays, radio shows, news, instructions, directions, explanation, oral poems/poetry reading, anecdotes, negotiations, etc.

Written/Visual: Biographies, novels, short stories, short plays, poems, newspapers and magazines articles, reports (e.g. crime, accident, sports), procedures (instructions), directions, reference books (e.g. dictionaries, encyclopaedias), textbooks (from different Learning Areas), advertisements, photographs, graphs – a variety of different types, tables, charts, diagrams, maps, etc.

Multimedia: films, documentaries, cartoons, television shows, television advertisements, computers, internet, CD-ROMs (where available), performances, exhibits, etc.

For principles of assessment, it recommended a continuous nature of assessment which was to ensure that assessment was on-going so that learners could be assessed regularly. This had

to be achieved through a variety of methods and strategies. However, any methods or strategies had to be appropriate to the ASs to be measured.

It set out the purposes or uses of assessment to include inter alia (RNCS 2002: 126):

- Baseline assessment which should take place at the beginning of a grade or phase in order to establish what learners know;
- Formative assessment which monitors and supports the process of learning and teaching, to monitor progress so as to improve learning;
- Summative assessment which gives an overall picture of learners' progress at a given time such as at the end of a term based on the accumulation of continuous assessment results;
- Diagnostic assessment which is used to determine the nature and cause of barriers to learning.

For feedback, it provided for oral and written feedback. For written feedback, the RNCS sought teachers' professional judgement to choose the best method among comments, percentage, codes or marks. However, the choice of any method of feedback had to depend upon the purpose of the assessment activity and to a number of factors which could include inter alia the number of learners in the class and the amount of time available; the complexity and the length of the assessment activity; whether learners' performance was compared to peers or to previous performance; etc. It stressed however that, irrespective of the code chosen, feedback was more effective when combined with comments.

6.2.2 National Protocol for Assessment

The National Protocol for Assessment was complementary to the RNCS. Its main purposes were articulated in three strands which included (nd: 1):

- to standardise the recording and reporting processes for Grades R – 12;
- to provide a policy framework for the management of assessment, school assessment records, basic requirements for learner profiles, teacher files, report cards, record sheets and schedules for Grades R – 12 and for the intermediate phase;
- to provide additional requirements on formal assessment.

For clarity of purpose, focus is placed on the third strand which is consistent with the object of this study.

The document identified two types of assessment including informal and formal assessment (nd: 3). Informal assessment which is also referred to as assessment for learning had to take place daily and to serve the purpose of monitoring and enhancing the learners' progress. It provided that formal assessment used a variety of assessment strategies and methods that could include projects, oral, presentations, tests, examinations, etc. Most importantly, methods or strategies of assessment had to be appropriate or proportionate to the developmental level of the learners in the phase (nd: 4). For example, Grade Six learners were not to be requested to do practical demonstrations.

Teachers were also required to make sure that the design of formal assessment measured a variety of skills as spelt out in ASs and that assessment criteria were very clear and were published before the assessment was conducted. Teachers were to record all formal assessment tasks, and were required to submit an annual formal assessment programme to the School Management Team (nd: 5).

With regard to the composition of formal assessment; the National Protocol for Assessment prescribed that; the intermediate phase in general and the Grade Six in particular comprised of School-Based Assessment (SBA) and end-of-year examination. They had to represent both 75% and 25 % of the yearly marks respectively (nd: 7).

6.2.3 Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes

A learning programme was a framework for planning, organising and managing classroom practices for a phase. It interpreted and sequenced the LOs and ASs into planned teaching, learning and assessment activities (DoE: 2003).

For teaching and learning as well as assessment, the document advocated a text-based approach while a process approach to writing was recommended. It emphasized, however, that texts in the intermediate phase had to be shorter and that the level of vocabulary and concepts learners were to be exposed to needed to be grade and age appropriate but challenging. It also recommended teachers to use a process approach that provides the learners with a framework on how they should go about producing a text (DoE 2003: 23-25).

In terms of assessment per se, the document addressed nature of assessment, aspects to consider when conducting assessment and forms of assessment (DoE 2003: 28-29).

For nature of assessment, it recommended that all LOs be assessed on an on-going basis while considering the aspects below when dealing with assessment. They included: (a) the focus of assessment had to be placed on one or two key LOs and its/their related ASs. (b) Feedback needed to be both oral and written, (c) formative assessment had to be on-going and (d) assessment had to involve a variety of forms such as creative writing, functional writing, spoken language, response to text, investigation, surveys, etc. (DoE: 2003).

6.2.4 Assessment Guidelines for Languages (Intermediate and Senior Phase)

It was also complementary to the RNCS and provided guidelines and ways of implementing assessment exclusively in languages in the Intermediate and Senior Phases. It addressed a number of topics, however, relative to this study, it focussed on the levels of languages and continuous nature of assessment (CASS) (Department of Education: nd: 2-7). Please refer to formal assessment of English in chapter one for levels of languages.

Teachers were required to address LOs in an integrated manner when designing assessment tasks. However, focus had to be placed on one or two key LOs and their related assessment standards (p5). They were also recommended to indicate clearly on the assessment task what LO(s) was/were measured (p5).

Relative to CASS, it stressed that all six LOs had to be assessed continuously formally and informally, and had to involve activities which used various kinds of assessment forms or strategies in order to capture a fair and representative sampling of the LOs and ASs. It stressed that continuous assessment in languages be managed and designed using the RNCS and Assessment Guidelines for Languages (Department of Education nd: 7). It prescribed that the composition of CASS had to comprise of 100% of the mark accumulated throughout the school year from Grades 4 to 8 and that the Intermediate Phase had to administer 2 formal assessment tasks per term or 8 per year. It also listed a number of aspects to consider when designing an assessment task. These included:

- clear and explicit instructions;
- the manner in which learners should be assessed; For example when doing a group task, learners needed to know whether it is the group effort or individual contribution which was going to be marked;
- scoring criteria or rubric.

6.2.5 The Recontextualization of the Curriculum Documents in Textbooks

Teachers use different learning and teaching support materials in the implementation of the curriculum. One of these learning materials is textbooks. According to Nicol and Crespo (2006: 3310), “textbooks provide a framework for thinking about what will be taught, when, how and how it will be evaluated.” They are viewed as critical resources for teachers in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set in terms of learners’ needs.

Baxter and Green (nd: 9) highlight the following principles as key for the development of effective materials in relation to assessment including:

- include assessment strategies that accommodate the need for formative, summative, formal as well as informal approaches;
- there should be clear instructions about the relationship of assessment to the relevant outcomes and an indication of its form (test, assignment, portfolio, etc).
- Examples of how the assessment would be recorded should be provided; and make provision for teachers to be evaluated by their learners

It is, therefore, useful to establish what guidance textbooks provide to teachers, and how they represent assessment requirements as spelt out by policy documents. To this end, a critical analysis of two Grade six English textbooks as well as their teachers’ guide was undertaken. These textbooks were:

- *English for Success Grade 6* and the accompanying Teacher Guide by Sally Burt, Tessa Kirkady and Debbie Ridgard, the Oxford University Press which provide for English Home Language.
- *Spot On English Grade 6* and the accompanying Teacher Guide by A Cunningham and P Vercueil, Heinemann.

The above mentioned textbooks are based on a thematic teaching and learning approach which according to Johannessen (2000: 11) is “a tightly sequenced investigation of a concept, beginning in the students’ intellectual home territory, and taking them into the unknown, unified by the recursive application of key questions”. It focusses the learners’ inquiry on broad questions that will connect and integrate the content, activities, and skills that are important to the curriculum (Johannessen: 2000).

A theme involves the creation of instruction that taps into the learners' prior experience. It starts with something that learners already know and thereafter takes them into an unknown territory. This will help them think more critically (Johannessen: 2000).

As for activities, Johannessen (2000: 19 – 21) argues that:

“a good thematic unit contains an introductory activity that hooks the learners, problematizes the theme or concept and raises key questions. This introductory activity should be based on learners' prior knowledge and should connect the theme to learners' experience. It should also contain a sequence of activities that provide continuous growth in sophistication such that there is a sequence of activities that build in complexity; adding more difficult activities as learners move through the unit.”

English for Success: Grade 6

English for Success contains eight chapters and provides for English Home Language. It attempts to address a broad and varied nature of activities. It provides an in-depth coverage of all LOs and ASs in each chapter. At the beginning of every chapter, a list of all LOs and ASs intended to be covered is given. LOs are quite balanced and record the following number of activities; LO1: 49, LO2: 92, LO3: 118, LO4: 109, LO5: 83 and LO6: 57. Effort was made to cover a variety of ASs in respect of their LOs in every chapter. LOs are integrated with emphasis being placed on one or two and LOs 3 and 4 are the most assessed with 118 and 109 activities respectively which is in line with the curriculum.

All the activities are of informal nature and include the following characteristics; they are kept fairly short. They make use of different forms such as oral (presentations, debates and listening activities), dialogues, surveys, projects, interviews, etc. They contain clear and adequate instructions, and seem to measure a variety of skills including higher order thinking. However, it uses very long texts, some activities do not focus on learners' concrete performance and the language seems to be above the developmental level of the learners.

The sequence of activities provides an unclear picture of growth in complexity; however, every chapter contains a varied nature of simple and complex activities. The textbook provides for a cross curricular curriculum with links virtually to all Learning Areas. To enhance learning and understanding, themes of interest to learners were chosen and activities include a variety of colour pictures. The textbook may be referred to as a good guide for teachers in terms of informal activities. No formal activities are provided either in the

learner's book or in the teacher's guide which makes it difficult for teachers to formally or summatively test skills that learners acquired on completion of a unit.

For marking, the teachers' guide provides answers for every activity. It also provides rubrics that teachers may use for marking extended writing and oral activities. However, these rubrics do not represent the depth of the curriculum in terms of ASs. The textbook fails to make specific how learners should be assessed regarding exercises involving processes and their final products. It also fails to give guidance on the manner in which feedback should be conducted.

Spot On English: Grade 6

Spot On Grade 6 covers 8 modules and provides for English First Additional Language. Each module is based on a theme and is broken down into units; and each unit has one or more activities.

Activities have attempted to cover all LOs and a large number of assessment standards. There is a grid at the start of every module that indicates how each unit attempts to address LOs and ASs. LOs 3, 4 and 5 are the most assessed though as a First Additional Language textbook; emphasis should have been placed on LOs 1 and 2 as per the RNCS requirements. The distribution of ASs is not balanced. Some ASs have been assessed repeatedly throughout the book while some others have received little or very little attention. For example; for LO6ASs2 and 3 are the most assessed, LO5 ASs 2, 3 and 4 have been assessed the most, LO3 concentrated more on ASs 1, 3 and 7, etc.

There are informal and formal activities in the book. Informal activities take place on an on-going basis while there is only one formal activity for each module in the learner's book. The teacher's guide however provides a revision test for every two modules. These tests may also be considered as formal. They are a bit longer and aim, according to Cunningham & Vercueil (2004: 12), "to test skills acquired while working in the two modules". However, a look into these tests demonstrates that they mainly focus on LO6; Language Structure and Use. For example; revision tests one and four which include respectively modules one and two, and seven and eight list eight questions each. Six questions for each test focus on LO6, one question on LO5 and one question on LO4.

Generally activities have been kept fairly short and measure a variety of skills including higher order thinking. They tend to be proportionate to the developmental level of the learners while making use of a simple and accessible language. However; the sequence of activities does not provide a continuous growth in complexity as learners move through the modules. Activities followed a linear pattern and failed to provide adequate instructions.

Despite great effort to integrate LOs, there are inconsistencies regarding some activities. These activities are not appropriate to or do not meet the LO or LOs indicated at the bottom of the page which is or are supposed to be the focus of assessment.

Informal activities also include a range of assessment strategies such as oral, surveys, presentations, written tasks, etc. while formal activities address only one form of assessment; written tasks.

Some of these formal activities are poor and some others are good. Those that are poor fail to give learners the opportunity to apply or demonstrate what they have learnt throughout the module and since they include only one form of assessment, they fail to capture a fair and representative sampling of LOs and ASs as spelt out in the curriculum document.

Those that are good measure a variety of cognitive skills including higher order thinking and give learners the opportunity to apply or demonstrate some of the things they have learnt in the module and place emphasis on concrete performance.

For marking, the teacher's guide provides answers for all the activities. However, neither the learner's book nor the teacher's guide provides assessment criteria or rubrics for marking oral and extended writing activities. There is no guidance on how marking should be done and in particular marking that involves processes. Nothing has been mentioned about the manner in which feedback should be done.

To further enable learning, the textbook has developed or dealt with themes that learners could identify with and has also attempted to construct meaning visually by including photographs and other visual aids relevant to activities as well as texts. However, these photographs are in black and white; they are dull and as a result produce very little intended

effect. Themes are local and international; and activities are cross-curricular with links to Life Orientation, Arts and Culture, Social Science and Economic and management Science, etc.

6.2.6 School Assessment Policy

The RNCS encouraged each school to develop an assessment programme which had to be based on official policy guidelines, and which, relative to this study, had to provide guidance in the manner in which continuous assessment was planned and implemented (Department of Education 2002: 128). This section will therefore analyse individual's school's assessment policy programme in order to establish the manner in which planning of CASS was done and the necessary steps undertaken for its implementation.

North Beach Primary

North Beach primary provided that CASS had to take place throughout the year for all grades. Formal tests to be written from Grades Four to Seven in accordance with the National protocol for Assessment. The school policy also provided that evaluations took place once a month across school and that only one project per Learning Area per year had to be given. It further determined to write summative assessment or examinations early June and at the end of November every year.

It had an assessment implementation framework spanning from January to December. In January for example baseline assessment within classes takes place and in February Learning Area, staff assessment and school support team meetings take place to decide on assessment for the year, etc.

Road Primary

Road primary assessment policy adhered to a continuous nature of assessment which was school-based, and constituted of a 100% of the total assessment. The document reproduced the content of the RNCS, Assessment Guidelines for Languages and the National Protocol for Assessment relative to assessment. The school failed to draw from the documents in order to elaborate its own assessment plan and the manner in which to implement it.

Kusala Primary

Kusala Primary adhered to the principles of CASS; however, it did not have clear provisions addressing its planning and implementation. The following can be found under the sub-title; “Types of Assessment” (Assessment Policy Kusala):

- CASS;
- Gathers learners performance on a continuous basis against clearly defined criteria using various methods; instruments techniques and contexts;
- Recording of the findings;
- Reflecting and reporting.

Zimasa Primary

Numerous attempts to collect Zimasa’s assessment policy were unsuccessful.

6.2.7 Teachers’ Own Professional Judgement

Teachers’ own professional judgement plays a key role regarding assessment practices. Their ability to decide or to draw conclusions about assessment is largely influenced or informed by factors that may include:

- accumulated knowledge and experience acquired over time;
- guidance by subject heads, other teachers and grade partners;
- previous assessment copies;
- marking;
- knowledge of the subject and
- planning

Marking remains one of the major factors that influence teachers’ professional judgement when deciding about assessment. This is related to class size, length of assessment, and questions formulation. It is also related to how much and what kind of marking should be done. Knowledge of the subject affects the teachers’ interest as well as their choice of what they have to teach which subsequently influences assessment practices. Professional judgement also bears on how teachers plan assessment at the phase and grade levels.

6.3 Match between Assessment Practices and Curriculum Requirements

This section seeks to analyse the extent to which assessment practices in different schools met curriculum requirements. It will determine whether assessment was conducted according to the guidelines and requirements as spelt out in the RNCS, National Protocol for Assessment, Assessment Guidelines for languages and Learning Programmes. It will also establish whether teachers made use of textbook activities/assessment or drew from them in order to inform their assessment practices.

It follows from the above that assessment practices were classified in one of the four categories below according to the manner in which it was conducted in respect of the curriculum guidelines and requirements. These categories include:

- a. an exceptional assessment practice;
- b. an adherent assessment practice;
- c. a partially adherent assessment practice or
- d. an inadequate assessment practice

An exceptional assessment practice is a practice that exceeded curriculum guidelines and requirements; the practice went beyond the requirements of the curriculum. An adherent practice is one which was done with due regard to the curriculum assessment guidelines and requirements; a practice where most of the requirements had been met. A partially adherent assessment practice is regarded as an assessment practice that met certain aspects of the curriculum requirements rather than most, and an inadequate practice refers to a practice that failed to or met the least number of curriculum requirements.

6.3.1 North Beach Primary

The RNCS

Teachers from North Beach primary provided evidence of 10 short answers and four extended writing formal assessments. For oral, there was evidence of one listening, three speaking and two reading formal assessments.

Assessment covered all LOs and a number of ASs. It clearly stated the LOs and ASs it dealt with on virtually all assessment papers. It attempted integration and gave evaluative rather than descriptive feedback.

The manner in which LOs were dealt with indicated that teachers had a pretty good understanding of the different LOs. Almost All extended writing and oral assessment indicated adequately the LOs they measured except one activity; the Media. It was assessed as a Reading activity covering LO3-AS8 while assessment criteria were more of a Speaking activity featuring LO2-AS: 1.3; 2.1; 3.3. The focus of the activity should have been placed on LO2 with integration of LO3.

Out of 10 short answer response assessment papers, six papers indicated the LOs they measured while four assessment papers did not do so. The distribution of LOs was inadequately balanced and failed to adhere to curriculum requirements. LO3 (Reading and Viewing) was the most assessed and LO1 the least with a single evidence provided. LOs 3 and 4 should have been assessed more as the school taught English at Home Language level.

Integration of LOs was attempted though never indicated. Where it occurred, it remained within the Learning Area rather than with both within and cross curricular. Within the Learning Area, attempts were limited to LO5. There were, however, cases where integration with other LOs was evident, such as in the case mentioned above, but which the teachers did not indicate.

A number of ASs were covered, however, there were, in some cases, inconsistencies or inaccuracies between the ASs teachers indicated on the assessment paper and those that they paper covered. In some other cases teachers used strands of ASs that did not exist. For example; the following could be observed on some assessment papers:

- LO3-AS6.3.1; 6.3.3; 6.3.5
- LO5-AS6.5.2
- LO6- AS6.6.6
- Etc.

The problem with the above example is that LO3-AS6 did not have a third or a fifth strand (bullet), it had only two strands (bullets). LO5 did not have six ASs, it listed only four ASs and LO6-AS6 did not have a sixth strand. Other inconsistencies are as follows;

A. Listening (LO1)

- Poetry Recital: The teachers assessed AS1: “Enjoys listening and responds critically to different kinds of oral texts such as stories, legends, poems, etc.” The rubric (which can be found in chapter 5), however, indicated the measurement of AS3.1.2; 4.1

B. Speaking (LO2)

- Crime Scene Investigation: The teachers assessed ASs6.2.1; 6.2.2; 6.2.4 however, the RNCS indicated that Speaking (LO2) had four ASs only. The teachers should have indicated AS3.1.2.

These inconsistencies were also observed with the speaking activity “Who Am I” where the teachers assessed AS6.2.1; 6.2.3; 6.2.4. AS6 was not listed in LO2 and the rubric showed that the teachers should have indicated AS1.3; 3.1.2.3.

C. Reading (LO3)

- All Dressed up and Ready to Go”: teachers provided no ASs for this activity but the rubric showed that AS1.2 was assessed.

D. Extended writing

- Who Am I: the teachers assessed the following AS6.4.1; 6.4.2; 6.4.3; 6.4.4. This is incorrect as AS6 is about the use of language in order to investigate and explore. The teachers should have assessed ASs2.1.2.3; 4.1.4 with integration of LO6-AS 2.5.

- Letters to agony Aunt and to Concerned Mum.: the following AS has been dealt with including; AS6.4.2; 6.4.5. The same mistake as the one mentioned above was made. The rubric revealed that ASs2.1; 4.3 with integration of LO6-AS 2.5 should have been indicated.

- News Article for the Front Page: learners’ performance was measured against AS 6.4.1; 6.4.2; 6.4.3; 6.4.4. However, assessment criteria indicated that the following ASs were measured. They included; ASs 1.2.3; 2.1.2.3 with integration of LO6-AS 2.5.

A further inconsistency that was established related to the vagueness or broadness of the phrasing of some criteria. These may include:

- use language correctly
- sentence construction

- sentence construction and use of grammar/language

The above indicated that teachers struggled to adequately and confidently determine ASs they dealt with as well as to effectively use ASs in order to measure learners' performers. It also revealed that teachers struggled or failed to provide an in-depth coverage of ASs.

For principle of assessment, teachers conducted informal or formative activities on an on-going basis, however, these activities failed to use a variety of strategies. (Refer to Appendix IV for more information on teachers' uses of formative assessment). While formal assessment included written and oral work, individual aspects such as extended writing, speaking, etc. failed to use a variety of strategies and methods.

Purpose of assessment is principally informal and formal as evidenced in the learners' books and assessment papers. Activities seemed proportionate to the developmental level of the learners and used an accessible language. Teachers also mentioned to have conducted a base line assessment in the beginning of the year but had provided no evidence in that regard.

Teachers failed to use a variety of texts that could include different forms as a result; they failed to capture a fair and representative sampling of ASs. Assessment followed a discrete point approach rather than a text-based approach as per official requirements.

Evaluative feedback was mainly used for formal activities. This form of feedback does not describe why an answer is wrong, tell the learners what they have not achieved or imply a better way of doing something. It is given in the form of marks, words or phrases of praise such as excellent, very good, good, keep up the good work, etc. and is for the most part given to strong and average learners.

The National Protocol for Assessment

Consistent with this study, the document dealt with formal assessment additional requirements and particularly its composition.

The composition of marks included two exams; one in June and another one in December. The June's exam included work that had been covered in the first and second terms and provided for the mid-year school's report. The December's exam consisted of work covered

in the third and fourth terms and provided for the end of year school's report. School Based Assessment provided results for the first and the second terms. This means that the 50% School Based Assessment and 50% June's and December's exams composition of the marks at North Beach Primary did not adhere to the National Protocol for Assessment but adhered to the school's own assessment policy.

Assessment Guidelines for Languages

The evidence of the books and formal assessment sheets revealed that North Beach Primary placed more emphasis on LO3. Teachers did not adhere to the 100% composition of the marks throughout the year, but managed according to their interpretation of task, to conduct two tasks a term. Activities contained instructions but were not clear and explicit for extended writing. They also struggled to provide appropriate rubrics for some extended writing and oral activities. For example:

“Who Am I”

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

CRITERIA	MARK
1. Use of mind-map in planning	/10
2. Writes in paragraphs and stays on the topic	/5
3. Uses correct spelling, punctuation and vocabulary	/5
4. Sentence construction and use of grammar/language	/10

The rubric lacked levels of performance and descriptors. Descriptors spell out what is expected of learners at each level of performance for each criterion. With this rubric, learners as well as teachers would have had difficulties in interpreting performance, and teachers will not know what really to look at in the learners' performance. Levels of performance allow the teacher to distinguish the quality of the learners' performance, to identify areas of concern that need improvement and to provide more detailed feedback to learners as well as themselves.

With regard to the manner in which learners had to be assessed and in particular with group work and work that involved processes, North Beach Primary failed to make specific or to determine how learners were to be assessed. No evidence of process writing could be found which means that assessment considered the final product only.

Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes

It appears that no intentional attempts of integration were made as spelt out in the above mentioned document. Integration that had been attempted but not indicated existed between some LOs with LO5.

North Beach Primary and Textbooks Usage

Textbooks are supposed to provide guidance to teachers in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set related to the learners' needs (Nicol and Crespo 2006: 310). In terms of the above, this section of the study seeks to determine whether assessment practices drew from assessment examples in textbooks.

Findings demonstrate that teachers did not make use of or draw from textbooks when conducting formal or informal activities and nor did they use a thematic approach. They seldom made use of provided textbooks. The entire process of teaching and learning was organized around teachers' own chosen resources. Teaching and learning did not focus the learners' inquiry on broad questions that connected and integrated the content, activities and the language skills. Language skills were dealt with in an atomistic or isolated rather than in an integrated and contextual manner.

Activities were self-made with a number of characteristics different from those of textbooks. They failed to problematize concepts in order to raise key questions tantamount to helping the learners think more critically. They focused on measuring lower order cognitive skills and their sequence did not provide a continuous growth in complexity. They placed emphasis on concrete performance and visual meaning was created for informal activities only. However, these visuals might have failed to produce the intended effect since they were in black and white.

In conclusion, assessment at North Beach Primary partially met curriculum requirements and could be referred to as partially adherent. It adhered to a few requirements such as indicating LOs, measuring concrete performance, providing rubrics, etc. However, it failed to capture most of the requirements including those that are meant to enhance its quality such as assessing critical thinking, increasing the complexity of activities, ensuring differentiation in questioning, etc.

6.3.2 Road Primary

The RNCS

Teachers from Road Primary provided evidence of nine short answer response, six extended writing, three speaking and four reading formal activities.

Analysis of activities found that teachers covered all LOs, except LO1. They seldom indicated LOs and ASs. LOs appeared in the four reading and one short answer response activities while ASs were specified in one extended writing; Dolphins.

Though teachers did not specify LOs in most of their formal activities, they nevertheless identified some activities as grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, essay, etc. For all reading activities, similar LOs were stated without ASs. These reading LOs read as follows; “LOs 5.3.1.9 and 5.2.3.2. This was inconsistent with the focus of the activity which was LO3. It therefore raised doubts on teachers’ ability to correctly and consistently deal with LOs and ASs. The single rubric set for all these reading activities, (refer to figure 6.2) revealed that teachers measured LO3-AS1.1.2 with integration of LO2-AS3.1.2. Inconsistency was also evident in the Dolphins extended writing activity of which rubric showed that teachers assessed ASs5.4.2.3 while analysis of the performance criteria revealed that teachers were supposed to assess ASs1.2; 3; 4.1 with integration of LO6-AS5.

The distribution of LOs was inadequately balanced and failed to adhere to curriculum requirements. LO3 was assessed the most and LO1 failed to feature at all. This was inconsistent with the curriculum requirements which recommended that all LOs were to be covered with more emphasis on LOs3 and 4 in schools where English was taught as Home Language.

ASs were not indicated and they were flawed the only time they were indicated in the above mentioned extended writing activity. Teachers failed to provide an in-depth coverage of ASs.

There were attempts of integration of LOs but were not often clearly stated. For example in “Call Back the Past”, LO2 and LO4 were integrated but were not stated.

In those rare instances integration was indicated, it showed major inconsistencies such as in LO3 activities mentioned earlier above.

Principles of assessment revealed that teachers' informal activities took place on an on-going basis. However, these activities failed to include a variety of methods. They were kept short and focused on measuring lower order cognitive abilities. Formal assessment included written and oral work but individual aspects and in particular extended writing and oral failed to use a variety of methods and strategies.

Purpose of assessment covered formal and informal activities. Activities seemed proportionate to the developmental level of the learners; they used an accessible language and avoided activities that could be unsuitable to the learners' grade level. Teachers mentioned to have conducted a baseline assessment but no evidence was provided. Assessment did not use a text-based and communicative approach as per curriculum requirements; they instead used a discrete point approach.

Feedback was mainly evaluative rather than descriptive. This implied that teachers gave marks, codes, percentages and wrote words and short phrases of encouragement such as very good, great effort, etc. Some instances where teachers attempted to guide learners on what they did wrong was when marking extended writing activities where teachers corrected spelling mistakes, filled in punctuation or a missing word, etc. It was also evidenced in speaking activities when teachers wrote comments such as; "stand still please; too soft or no effort; etc. However, no descriptive comments on how learners could improve were given.

Teachers failed to use a variety of texts that could include different forms and therefore failed to capture a fair and representative sampling of ASs.

The National Protocol for Assessment

Since most aspects that the National Protocol for Assessment dealt with were examined under the RNCS, the only remaining requirement to focus on was that of the composition of formal assessment marks.

The composition of marks was 50% School based Assessment and 50% from examinations. Examinations took place twice a year; in June and in December. The June exam, which was

based on work covered in the first and second terms, provided for the mid-year school's report. The December examination measured learners' performance on work covered in the third and fourth terms for the end of the year's school's report. School Based Assessment provided marks for the first and the second terms school's report. The composition of marks failed to adhere to the prescription of the above mentioned assessment document.

Assessment Guidelines for Languages

Analysis of formal assessment showed that teachers placed emphasis on LO3 and LO6 rather than LOs 3 and 4. The composition of assessment marks failed to meet the requirement of a 100% accumulated from School Based Assessment. Teachers conducted nine short answer response, six extended writing, three speaking and four reading formal activities. Evidence established that on average teachers conducted at least two formal short answer responses, one extended writing and one reading formal assessment activities per term.

Instructions were explicit and adequate in short response activities and presented a rather disturbing picture in reading fluency and extended writing. In reading fluency activities, there were literally no instructions to guide the learners. The one line statement that could be considered as "instructions" was inconsistent with the focus of the activity and was misleading. The line read as follows; "This is a prepared assessment and it is all about presentation."

Some extended writing activities' such as "Dolphins, Call back the Past", contained explicit and adequate instructions, however, some others, either had no instructions or had implicit instructions. For example; "My June Holiday" has no instructions at all, in "Letter to a Friend" instructions read as follows "write to a friend about Cecilia". This did not give learners enough to work with because it was incomplete, implicit, imprecise and vague.

In terms of marking, teachers used mainly scores for short response answer activities and rubrics were provided for oral and extended writing activities. However, most rubrics were implicit, ambiguous, inconsistent or lacking. For examples:

- LO2 Speaking

1. "Telling the Class about Me"

Criteria	My mark
Presentation: contents and fluency	/10
Use of keywords	/2
Good introduction and ending	/3
Worked within the time limit	/2
Eye contact	/3

- LO4: Extended Writing

1. MY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Content: 10	Spelling: 5	Language &punctuation: 5	Total: 20	%

These rubrics had insufficient levels of performance and lacked descriptors and therefore failed to determine how learners had to perform at each level. Learners could have been able to understand what a good or bad performance was if levels of performance were identified and descriptors were spelt out. Marking was not consistent as teachers did not make explicit what to look at in the learners' work. Some criteria were also vague and meaningless. For example; criteria such as; "presentation: contents and fluency", "content", etc. did not give any information learners could work with. "Spelling", "Language" and Punctuation" were meaningless. "Good introduction and ending" was vague and general in that what could be good or bad to the learner, could not be to the teacher. The criteria should have been made more explicit.

LO2: Speaking

2. “CALL BACK THE PAST”

RUBRIC

Criteria	Code			
- Planning and Preparation	1	2	3	4
- Followed instruction	1	2	3	4
- Audibility	1	2	3	4
- Body language and eye contact	1	2	3	4
- Creativity	1	2	3	4
- Mark/ % / Code	Mark: /20		%	

LO4: Extended Writing

2. “Call back the Past”

CRITERIA	CODE			
- Followed instructions	4	3	2	1
- Use of direct speech	4	3	2	1
- Correct spelling	4	3	2	1
- Grammar	4	3	2	1
- Neatness and presentation	4	3	2	1
- Mark/ % / Code	/20		%	

These rubrics did not define the levels of performance and therefore rendered all these codes meaningless as learners would never have been able to interpret the criteria.

Teacher’s Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes

Explicit and correct integration took place only once with “Call back the past”. In this activity learners were assessed for both LO2 and LO4 and for marking, two rubrics were provided. Most integration happened implicitly between LO5 and other LOs where language was used in order to think and reason and between LO6 and other LOs where language was used to interpret text.

The Road Primary and Textbooks Usage

There was no evidence that established that Road Primary teachers made use of or drew from provided textbooks to inform their assessment practices. They did not use a thematic approach either and therefore relied on randomly isolated and atomistic selected units. The learners' enquiry was not contextualized and did not focus on broad questions that connected and integrated the content, activities and language skills.

Activities were teacher-made and focused on measuring mainly lower order cognitive skills. They did not have a sequence capable to providing a continuous growth in complexity and failed to create visual meaning. Teachers' informal activities were short while formal activities were long. They placed emphasis on concrete performance and activities were proportionate to the learners' level.

In conclusion, though the Road primary' assessment covered most of the LOs and provided rubrics, it could be regarded as an inadequate practice. The practice met the least number of requirements and failed to adhere to most requirements. It failed to provide an in-depth coverage of ASs, to tap into higher order cognitive skills, to provide integration both within the learning area and cross curricula, etc. It failed to use a text-based and communicative approach. Assessment relied instead on an isolated and atomistic approach. It also failed to meet the composition of the marks as stipulated in both Assessment Guidelines for Languages and the National protocol for Assessment. It did not provide a continuous growth in complexity. Etc.

6.3.3 Zamuli Primary

The RNCS

The Zamuli Primary teacher conducted nine short answer formal activities and no evidence of extended writing or oral formal activities were produced which is clear that the teacher did not cover all the LOs. Assessment scripts revealed LOs and ASs were identified or stated except in one activity. The activity listed LOs and ASs as follows:

- LOs: LO3, LO4, LO5 and LO6
- ASs: 6.3.1.2, 6.4.1.2, 6.2.5, 6.6.2.1

The manner in which LOs and ASs were listed pointed to confusion since it did not make specific what the focus of the activity was beside the fact that ASs were listed inconsistently.

Assuming that the fourth set of ASs is related to LO5, it is inconsistent because LO5 had four ASs only rather than six as listed by the teacher and the last set of ASs would also be inconsistent because LO6-AS6 had no strands at all.

From the LOs that the teacher had covered, emphasis had been placed on LO6. No explicit integration of LOs was indicated except in the above mentioned activity. It, however, happened implicitly between LOs3 and 6 with LO5. The teacher also failed to provide an in-depth coverage of ASs.

For principles of assessment, evidence suggested that informal activities took place continuously while nine short response answer formal activities were conducted. These activities focused on measuring lower order cognitive competency and failed to include a variety of strategies. They used a discrete point approach rather than a text-based and communicative approach.

In terms of purposes of assessment, there is evidence of informal and formal activities. Activities were proportionate to the developmental level of the learners but failed to point to development in that the sequence of activities did not provide a continuous growth in complexity.

Teachers failed to use a variety of texts that could include different forms and therefore failed to capture a fair and representative sampling of LOs and ASs.

Feedback was mainly evaluative for formal activities and both evaluative and descriptive for informal activities. The teacher gave scores when marking both formal and informal activities. However, informal activities were followed by corrections where the learners could be made aware of their mistakes and how they could improve.

The National Protocol for Assessment

The composition of marks did not meet the requirement of the above mentioned document. The school conducted two exams that took place in June and December which gathered 50% of the marks and the other 50% was accumulated from school based assessment.

Assessment Guidelines for Languages

English at Zamuli Primary was taught as first additional language, however, the teacher failed to assess LOs1 and 2 which according to Assessment Guidelines for Languages should have been premised. The teacher, instead, placed more emphasis on LO6. The composition of marks also failed to meet the 100% requirement as recommended by the document. As regards the number of tasks, the teacher's practice failed it since it did not include all the LOs.

Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes

Integration as required by Learning Programmes mainly took place between LOs3 and 6 with LO5.

Zamuli Primary and Textbooks Usage

There was no evidence that showed that the teacher used or drew from provided textbooks in order to conduct formal activities. There was some evidence that suggested that the teacher made use of textbooks for informal activities. He did not use a thematic approach and his pedagogic process was predicated upon randomly isolated and atomistic selected units rather than as part of an integrated approach. This approach did not create a learning environment that allowed learners to think more critically and did not focus the learners' enquiry on broad questions that connected and integrated the content, activities and language skills.

Activities were teacher made and focused on lower order cognitive skills. They did not have a sequence capable to providing a continuous growth in complexity. They failed to create visual meanings and placed emphasis on concrete performance. Informal activities were short while formal activities were a bit longer.

In conclusion, Zamuli Primary struggled to conduct assessment within the framework of the curriculum requirements and therefore its assessment practice could be referred to as inadequately adherent. Some of the requirements that were not adhered to include: failure to cover LO1, LO2 and LO4. Failure to indicate and state LOs. Failure to emphasize on LOs1 and 2 and to provide an in-depth coverage of assessment standards. Major inconsistencies in ASs that were stated. Activities did not provide adequate and explicit instructions and did not consist of a variety of forms. Assessment failed to adhere to the composition requirement as spelt out in both the National Protocol for Assessment and Assessment Guidelines for

Languages. Failure to provide integration both within the learning area and cross curricula. Assessment did not include all levels of cognitive ability and failed to provide a continuous growth in complexity. Etc.

6.3.4 Kusala Primary

The RNCS

The teacher from Kusala Primary conducted eight short answer response and two extended writing formal assessment and no evidence of oral work was produced. This showed that all LOs were not covered.

LOs were stated in one activity while ASs in four activities. In most cases, LOs were inadequately identified and where they were stated, the teacher did so inconsistently. For examples;

- “Write a reply to this letter”; LO-6.4.2. The teacher overlooked to state the LO. As for ASs; AS6 is wrongly indicated as it dealt with the use of language in order to ask critical and follow-up questions, to discuss the validity of information, etc. According to instructions, the activity measured LO4- AS1.1; 3; 4.1.2.3
- “Independent reading and thinking”; 6.3.3; 6.5.2. This is a comprehension activity according to the paper record but which was incorrectly identified. Looking at ASs, AS6 listed two strands (bullets) only. It should have been identified as “Reading and Viewing” integrating “Thinking and Reasoning”.

The distribution of LOs was not balanced with LO6 being the most assessed followed by LO3. There was no explicit indication of integration of LOs but it happened implicitly mainly between LO6, LO3 (comprehension) and LO5.

Assessment failed to provide an in-depth coverage of ASs. For example; none of the oral ASs were covered. ASs were not stated or indicated on most papers and were inconsistent on the few occasions that they were.

Principles of assessment indicated evidence that informal activities took place on an on-going basis while formal assessment counted eight short answer response and two extended writing

activities. Activities were short, they measured lower order cognitive abilities and they failed to use a variety of methods. They used a discrete point approach rather than a text-based and communicative approach.

With regard to purposes of assessment, there is evidence of one baseline activity which took place at the beginning of the year as well as informal and formal activities. Most of these activities were proportionate to the learners' developmental level and used an accessible language. Teachers failed to use a variety of texts that included different forms.

Evaluative feedback was mainly used for formal assessment and both evaluative and descriptive feedback was used for informal assessment. Evidence found in the learners' books showed that corrections were done after virtually each activity. This showed the learners what they had done wrong and how they could improve.

The National Protocol for Assessment

The composition of marks was different from the provisions of the National Protocol for Assessment. Kusala held two exams which took place in June and in December.

Assessment Guidelines for Languages

Kusala taught English as First Additional Language, however, the teacher failed to place emphasis on LOs1 and 2. Emphasis was placed instead on LO6. The practice failed the composition of the marks and the number of annual assessment tasks. Assessment contained clear instructions for short answer response activities but no rubrics were provided for both writing activities. These activities did not involve any process.

Teacher's Guidelines for the Development of Learning Programmes

No explicit integration could be observed, however, implicit integration took place between LOs6 and 3 with LO5.

Kusala Primary and Textbooks Usage

Evidence indicated that the teacher made use of school textbooks for informal activities. For example:

- New Day by Day; Page 20
- Power Builder; Pages 18, 30, etc.

- Modern Graded English, Page 10, 160, etc.
- Etc.

There was no evidence indicating that formal assessment used or drew from textbooks examples. Assessment did not use a thematic approach and was based on isolated and atomistic selected units that were unable to help learners think more critically. The learners' enquiry was not contextualized and did not focus on broad questions that could connect and integrate the content, activities and language skills.

Activities were teacher-made and focused on measuring mainly lower order cognitive skills. They did not have a sequence capable to providing a continuous growth in complexity and failed to create visual meaning. Teachers' informal activities were short while formal activities were long. They placed emphasis on concrete performance and were proportionate to the learners' level.

The above demonstrates that assessment at Kusala struggled to meet curriculum requirements as it failed to adhere to most requirements and therefore could be referred to as inadequately adherent.

LO1 and LO2 were not assessed and assessment failed to adequately identify and state LOs and ASs. It failed to place emphasis on LO1 and LO2 and to provide an in-depth coverage of ASs. Extended writing assessment provided inadequate instructions and failed to use a variety of methods. It failed to carry out integration as spelt out in the Assessment Guidelines for Languages and the composition of marks failed to adhere to both the National Protocol for Assessment and Assessment Guidelines for Languages. Assessment focused on lower order cognitive competency and did not provide a continuous growth in complexity. Etc.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Three case studies of Grade Six teachers' formal assessment practices in English were conducted. They aimed at describing the intentions of and methods used to assess, as well as to establish whether the assessment was compatible with official policy documents.

Four primary schools and six teachers were involved in the study. The schools represented two different levels of resources and three different social locations in Cape Town. They included a well-resourced school situated in an affluent suburb, a poorly-resourced school, located in an under-privileged area and which both taught English as Home Language and two poorly-resourced schools found in different townships teaching English as First Additional Language.

7.1 Scope and Range of Teachers' Assessment Practices

7.1.1 Assessment of Writing

Across the schools, comprehension and grammar items consisted largely of short answer questions, sentence completion and mixed items. There were also instances when some teachers used short answer and objective items to assess listening comprehension. The well-resourced school administered 232 items which included supply, multiple choice/true-false and matching items. The poorly resourced English Home Language School ran 222 objective items including all the above mentioned three types of items. One of First Additional Language schools administered 112 items which were all of short answer response types. The other First Additional Language School used 189 items including supply, multiple choices and a matching item.

Teachers mainly used short answer question items to assess comprehension while completion and mixed items were used to assess language structure. There was an imbalance of items distribution. Supply items were used more than other formats.

Assessment of comprehension was dominant in English Home Language Schools while assessment of grammar was more prevalent in English First Additional Language School. Comprehension hardly included a variety of text types and the composition of items seldom distinguished between literary and informational texts. Items focused essentially on retrieving

explicitly stated information and most learners in all these schools struggled in grammatical assessment which focused essentially on analysed knowledge.

Assessment of vocabulary, which is part of comprehension, was not done by some teachers, and where it was done, it failed to take into account the context in which words were used in the texts. Teachers simply asked learners to find definitions of words in the dictionary.

Strong learners from the well-resourced school performed better in comprehension and grammar. Average learners did well in comprehension and struggled a little in grammar while weak learners struggled in both but more in comprehension than grammar. Strong learners from the poorly resourced Home Language School performed satisfactorily in comprehension and grammar with items that required a word or a phrase. Average learners did well in comprehension but struggled in grammar and weak learners struggled across all language aspects. In the First Additional Language schools, strong learners performed better in comprehension and all three categories underperformed in grammar. Apart from the higher performing learners from the well-resourced school, all learners were found to have limited vocabulary and all struggled with spelling. Assessment of extended writing did not take place in one of the First Additional Language schools and its quality was compromised in schools where it was done.

The well-resourced conducted four extended writing activities. Activities did not provide any evidence of process writing. The teachers used two modes - expository and narrative – and three forms of writing namely, article, letter and story. They managed to provide instructions and assessment criteria; however, they struggled to construct suitable rubrics. In most cases, instructions were not explicit enough about the purpose and the audience. Assessment rubrics identified levels of performance but failed to spell out or define descriptors at each level of performance (refer to Appendix I for rubrics). According to the marking, a good essay was one written in paragraphs that contained fewer grammatical mistakes and a poor essay had no paragraphs, did not make sense, and contained many language mistakes. Marking was evaluative and placed a strong emphasis on the aspect of language use to the detriment of the development and organization of ideas.

The poorly resourced Home Language School conducted six extended writing activities and produced no evidence of process writing. Activities included an expository and a narrative

mode but failed to use a variety of approaches and forms. In most cases, activities instructions were inadequate and ambiguous, and failed to indicate the audience. Most assessment rubrics repeated similar criteria and failed to spell out or define descriptors at each level of performance. Marking was done evaluative and focused more on the aspect of language use than on the development and organization of ideas. A good essay had less grammatical mistakes, was written in paragraphs and adhered to most criteria. A poor one had multiple grammatical mistakes, had no paragraphs and failed to adhere to most criteria.

One township school did not conduct any extended writing activity. The other one conducted two activities. They did not produce any evidence of process writing and both activities used an expository mode. They were inadequately set and had implicit instructions. Marking was evaluative, focused on the aspect of language and use, and was done arbitrary as the teacher did not provide rubrics. A good piece of writing contained less grammatical mistakes and was written in paragraphs.

Comparing the three aspects of written assessment, it was found that extended writing is the most difficult aspect for both teachers and learners. Teachers struggled to set out adequate extended writing activities and to create a suitable marking tool. They also struggled to diversify the phraseology of their items and to give developmental and descriptive feedback to assist learners to improve.

Learners found it difficult to develop and organise ideas coherently and logically in paragraphs, and using language appropriately. Grammar, spelling and limited vocabulary are other aspects that learners struggled with and comprehension was the least challenging aspect. It is, however, important to mention that most comprehension assessment has been found to be at the lower order level. A different outcome was likely to be observed if all cognitive levels had to be included. The poorly resourced schools in general and the townships schools in particular are the most affected and the well-resourced school is the least affected.

The language proficiency played a significant role in the manner in which learners' answered assessment tasks. Most of the better performing learners whose mother tongue was English had an extended vocabulary, and, together with average learners, spelt fairly well but weak learners had a limited vocabulary, struggled in grammar and made a lot of spelling mistakes.

In the poorly resourced schools, most learners in the three categories had limited vocabulary, struggled with spelling and grammar.

With an average number of 38 learners in these Grade Six classes, class size did not seem to significantly influence the manner and the extent to which assessment was conducted, learners' scripts were marked and feedback was given to learners. It was found that the school with the highest number of learners conducted more assessment than those with the least number of learners. Teachers who adopted a positive attitude towards assessment conducted more assessment than those with a negative attitude; however, the quality of their assessment remained virtually the same. Teachers used memos to mark learners' work and gave a grade when they marked.

7.1.2 Oral Assessment

The well-resourced school was the only school to have covered all three aspects of oral assessment including a written listening comprehension, three speaking and two reading activities. The listening activity used short answer questions that focused mainly on recall of information that had been heard. As a result, many other listening skills were not assessed. The speaking activities were adequately constructed but had inadequate rubrics. One rubric lacked levels of performance and the other one gave insufficient levels of performance and failed to give descriptors. Their reading activities had instructional flaws and inadequate rubrics as well. The instructions for one of the activities could have been used for a speaking activity and their rubrics failed to define levels of performance. Teachers used evaluative feedback when they marked all these activities.

Two of the three speaking activities of the poorly resourced Home Language School contained clear and explicit instructions. Teachers used rubrics to mark, but two of the three rubrics failed to give descriptors. Reading activities had no instructions and rubrics contained the same criteria throughout the year. The school did not assess listening. Both township schools did not conduct any oral assessment since no evidence of oral assessment was produced.

The well-resourced and the poorly resourced Home Language School did not only struggle with the quality of their oral assessment, but also with the use of a variety of forms and techniques of oral communication. The challenges that teachers experienced might have been

the result of a lack of official curriculum of oral communication as well as a lack of guidance related to how teachers had to conduct oral assessment.

7.2 Adherence to Official Curriculum Documents

The policy documents examined included the RNCS, the National Protocol for Assessment, the Assessment Guidelines for Languages and the Teachers' Guide for the Development of Learning Programme. These were intended to be used in conjunction with textbooks, the school's assessment policy and teachers' own professional judgement.

The research established that no school had conducted assessment which closely resembled the requirements and nor any conducted assessment beyond or exactly as prescribed in official documents. The well-resourced school managed a partially adherent assessment practice while in the rest of the schools assessment was inadequate though at different levels.

The study found that teachers had to deal with quite a number of official assessment documents which they either were unaware of or hardly read (refer to Appendix V for more information regarding teachers' views on assessment). They contained a substantial number of requirements some of which teachers were not familiar with. Some of these requirements were clear, realistic and easy to do and some others were unclear, unrealistic and difficult to do.

The RNCS, which is the main official document, was written in a language that was not easily accessible to teachers. It placed demands and provided some requirements that were not realistic and which teachers found difficult to adhere to. For example; the identification of LOs and ASs, continuous assessment of learners' achievement formally and informally, use of a range of methods, strategies and forms of assessment, evidence of numerous assessment records, use of marking tools such rubrics, etc.

It failed to provide guidance specifically in extended writing and oral assessment. In extended writing, teachers' assessment contained inadequate rubrics and failed to include key extended writing skills. Feedback was mainly evaluative and failed to help learners to improve. Teachers struggled to assess extended writing as a process. In oral assessment, the RNCS did not provide an official curriculum that could guide teachers as to what and how to assess. In addition, the distinction between listening and speaking made it difficult for teachers to

differentiate their interrelated skills. As a result, some teachers ignored it completely and some others did what they just could.

The RNCS also contained numerous ASs against which learners' performance had to be measured. As a result, teachers mixed them up and were confused in choosing which ones to assess and which ones to leave. Similarly, it was also not easy to make informed choices in terms of which assessment standards to give priority to. Consequently, assessment repeated ASs teachers understood and were comfortable with, and avoided those they did not understand. Finally assessment that measured the same skills was done repeatedly.

Confusion was also created in the composition of assessment marks between the National Protocol for Assessment which provides for 75% of SBA and 25% of end of year exam and the Assessment Guidelines for Languages which made provision for 100% SBA. In this case teachers did not know which requirements to adhere to and all opted for 50% examination and 50% of school based assessment.

Lack training in assessment and that of guidance and/or support played a major role in the teachers' failure to use a text-based and a communicative approach to the assessment of language. All used a discrete point assessment approach and most failed to include a variety of assessment forms and strategies in their activities. They were also confused in the manner in which to integrate LOs. The RNCS Textbooks did not provide an adequate assessment framework and nor did they offer enough or suitable guidance. Lack of clarity or guidance was also observed in terms of two assessment tasks per term that had to include one or more activities. It was unclear what activities a task should have consisted of.

To varying degrees, all teachers in these schools did not meet the number of assessment requirements per term and failed to adhere to the composition requirements as set out by both the National Protocol for Assessment or the Assessment Guidelines for Languages. They also failed to place emphasis on recommended LOs in respect of the school's use of the language level. Lack of support or guidance played a major role in teachers' failure to use a process-based approach with their extended writing assessment and a text-based and communicative approach to assessment recommended for languages. It was also found that assessment did not use or draw from textbooks.

The research established that all aspects of English formal assessment did not take place in all these schools. Extended Writing and oral assessments were the most challenging. One of the First Additional Language Schools did not conduct extended writing assessment and both did not do oral assessment. Teachers struggled to set adequate tasks using a variety of methods and strategies. Assessment of comprehension focused mainly on lower order competency and failed to distinguish between the different purposes for reading. Learners struggled more in assessment of grammar and that of extended writing. The study further found that the scope and range of assessment, as well as adherence to official requirements were compromised. This was the result of factors that included; lack of resources, inadequate learners' language proficiency, lack of guidance, unclear and ambiguous assessment standards, lack of oral official curriculum, and lack of adequate assessment skills. Teacher attitude towards assessment had also been found to have had a negative impact on the implementation of assessment.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Assessment Criteria and Rubrics

Extended Writing

North Beach Primary (figure 4.1)

1. Who am I?

CRITERIA	MARK
1. Use of mind-map in planning	/10
2. Writes in paragraphs and stays on the topic	/5
3. Uses correct spelling, punctuation and vocabulary	/5
4. Sentence construction and use of grammar/language	/10

2. News articles for the front page

Assessment Criteria

CRITERIA	WEAK (1)	FAIR (2)	GOOD (3)	VERY GOOD (4)	EXCELLENT (5)
1. Clear planning (mind-map) and use of rough design.					
2. Use of suitable headline.					
3. Writes in paragraphs and stays on the topic.					
4. Sentence construction.					
5. Uses correct spelling and punctuation.					
6. Uses language correctly.					
7. Use of suitable picture and caption					
8. Work has been edited and rewritten.					

3. Letters to agony Aunt and to Concerned Mum

Criteria	Mark
1. Use of mind –map in planning	/10
2. Writes in paragraphs and stays on the topic	/5
3. Uses correct spelling, punctuation and vocabulary	/5
4. Sentence construction and use of grammar/language	/10

Road Primary(figure 4.2)

1. My Bibliography

Content: 10	Spelling: 5	Language & punctuation: 5	Total: 20	%

2. Call back the past

CRITERIA	CODE			
- Followed instructions	4	3	2	1
- Use of direct speech	4	3	2	1
- Correct spelling	4	3	2	1
- Grammar	4	3	2	1
- Neatness and presentation	4	3	2	1
- Mark/ % / Code	/20		%	

3. Dolphins

	Weak	Developing	Strong	Value
Ideas and Content	Limited contents and ideas	Clear ideas, but content still limited	Clear and original ideas and content.	/10
Word choice/Vocabulary	Limited vocabulary	Functional vocabulary	Accurate, expressive and appealing vocabulary	/2
Grammar and paraphrasing	Noticeable errors	Some grammatical errors	Generally correct. Very good effort	/3
Spelling	Weak spelling. Not enough effort made.	Some effort made	Excellent spelling. Commendable effort.	/3
Presentation and illustration	Untidy and careless work.	Satisfactory effort. Now try even harder.	Excellent preparation	/2

4. My June Holiday

Story content	Language and punctuation	Language and punctuation
/10	/5	/5

5. Letter to a friend

Layout	Story content	Language and punctuation	Language and punctuation
/5	/5	/5	/5

6. Telling the story in pictures

Story content	Language and punctuation	Spelling
/10	/5	/5

ORAL Work

North Beach Primary

Speaking Activities (figure 5.1)

1. Who am I?

Criteria: The pupil	Needs help (0-1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Excellent (4)
- Clearly planned and constructed collage and oral. - Uses the collage effectively. Good, clear, appropriate pictures.				
- Speaks in full sentences and stays on the topic. - Shares ideas from personal experience. - Follows a logical sequence.				
- Uses appropriate language and vocabulary. - Good pronunciation and articulation of words.				
- Speaks clearly and audibly - Speaks with confidence.				
- Has a good posture and makes eye contact with the audience. - Holds the attention of the audience.				

In addition to the above assessment rubric, the teacher provided a learner's self-assessment check list as well.

Self-assessment I:	No	Sometimes	yes
- read and understood the task.			
- followed the instructions			
- have neat collage with good, clear pictures.			
- spoke in full sentences.			
- made eye contact with audience.			
- stayed on the topic.			
- used my collage during the oral.			
- completed my work on time.			
- did my best			
- enjoyed the task.			
- Spoke clearly and audibly			

2. Crime Scene investigation

Criteria	Weak (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	V. Good (4)	Excellent (5)
-Speaks in full sentences and stays on the topic.					
-Follows a logical sequence.					
-Uses appropriate language and vocabulary.					
-Speaks clearly and audibly.					
-has good posture and makes eye contact with the audience.					
-Good pronunciation and articulation of words.					
- Speaks with confidence and holds the attention of the audience.					
- Stayed within the time limit.					

3. Poetry recital

You will be assessed on the following aspects:

Criteria	YES	NO
Knows his/her lines		
Uses expression		
Makes eye contact		
Uses voice modulation		
Uses gestures or body movements		
Positions themselves correctly		
Uses the space provided		
Recites clearly		
Recites audibly		
Uses a poem suited to their level		

MARK	0-1	2	3	4-5
Content, Planning	No evidence of research and planning. Not a good choice of poem.	Very little evidence of research and planning. Choice of poem satisfactory.	Good research and planning. Good choice of poem.	Well researched and planned. Very good choice of poem.
Use of voice, enunciations, use of language, posture	Inappropriate register and poor enunciation, inappropriate/lack of gestures and language.	Capable speaker with lapses in audibility and voice control and insufficient of gestures.	Competent speaker with adequate voice control and body language used appropriately.	Lively. Original and inspiring speaker with excellent voice control & body language. Excellent command of the language.
Audience, awareness	Very little audience rapport.	Adequate, confidence and audience rapport.	Demonstrate confidence and good audience rapport.	Remarkable and effective audience rapport.
Poetic style	Poet's message not carried across to audience at all. No rhythm/tone evident in poem.	Poet's message not carried out effectively enough. Hardly and rhythm and tone/timing evident	Poet's message carried across effectively. Rhythm and tone good and maintained throughout.	Poet's message carried across very well. Rhythm and tone very good and effective throughout.

Reading Activities (figure 5.2)

1. The media

Marks	Criteria
/5	-Informative and original presentation which demonstrates a high level of understanding.
/5	-Skillfully uses specific examples and quotations from the article.
/5	-Show evidence of critical thinking by demonstrating insight about article and reflection on the structure of the article.
/5	-Presentation communicates information, feelings, and carefully supported opinions about what is read. - Presentation is impressive and entertaining.

2. "All dressed up and ready to go..."

Criteria	Needs help (0 – 1)	Average (2)	Reasonably competent (3)	Highly competent (4 – 5)
Fluency and audibility/skill	Does not read satisfactorily, fluently or audibly. Cannot read without prompting.	Sometimes reads fluently and audibly and without prompting.	Generally reads fluently and audibly and without prompting.	Reads consistently fluently and audibly. Clearly able to read without prompting.
Pronunciation and Articulation	Pronunciation and articulation weak and learner often stumble over words.	Pronunciation and articulation quite good, but learner stumbles over some words.	Pronunciation and articulation generally good.	Excellent pronunciation and articulation.
Expression and intonation/punctuation	Poor expression and intonation. Disregards punctuation.	Sometimes reads with expression and intonation. Sometimes acts on punctuation.	Expression and intonation generally good. Generally acts on punctuation.	Excellent expression and intonation. Always acts on punctuation.
Confidence and Enjoyment	Lacks confidence to read aloud. Does not enjoy reading.	Sometimes shows confidence to read aloud and sometimes enjoys reading.	Generally shows confidence to read aloud and enjoys reading.	Reads aloud confidently. Clearly enjoys reading.

Road Primary

Speaking Activities (figure 5.3)

1. Telling the class about me

Criteria	My mark
Presentation: contents and fluency	/10
Use of keywords	/2
Good introduction and ending	/3
Worked within the time limit	/2
Eye contact	/3

2. History of medicine

Criteria	Highly Competent 5	Competent 4	Developing 3	More guidance 2 or 1
Preparation	The learner was well prepared and ready to present orally. The learner had key words and had practised	The learner was well prepared but hesitant to be called on. The learner had key words and referred to them often	The learner was partially prepared, but not confident enough to present an oral. The learner did not use key words and needed full notes.	The learner was unprepared or only partially prepared. The learner could not produce notes or key words of preparation.
Presentation	The learner was relaxed and confident. The learner spoke clearly with good tone diction and expression	The learner was a little nervous and tended to fidget at times. Spoke fairly clearly with some expression.	The learner was nervous or needed to be reminded to speak up or speak more clearly. The learner forgot lines and tended to read long passages.	The learner did not stand still. He/she giggled or mumbled. The learner was unable to speak clearly and logically.
Content	The learner's oral presentation was very interesting and the audience was attentive.	The learner's oral was interesting and the audience was attentive most of the time.	The learner's oral lacked impact and the audience became restless.	There was no real content to the learner's oral. Ideas were jumbled and not thought through. No interest from audience.

3. Call back the past

Criteria	Code			
- Planning and Preparation	1	2	3	4
- Followed instruction	1	2	3	4
- Audibility	1	2	3	4
- Body language and eye contact	1	2	3	4
- Creativity	1	2	3	4
- Mark/ % / Code	Mark: /20		%	

My comment about my task: _____

Reading Fluency Activities (figure 5.4)

Categories	Weak	Getting there	Good-excellent	Value
Volume and clarity	- Mumbles - Almost inaudible	- Too soft - Sometimes too soft	Clear and confident	/2
Contact with audience	No eye contact	Limited eye contact	Good eye contact	/2
Fluency and speed	Reading is jerky	Semi fluent	- Fluent - Good tempo	/2
Expression	None	- Some - Good	Excellent	/3
Word recognition	- Poor - Not well prepared	Some errors	No errors	/1

Appendix II: Examples of good extended writing

North Beach Primary

3 February 2010
"Who am I..."

9
9
8
I was born on the 6th of October 1998. My hair is brown and below my shoulders. I have green, slightly oriental eyes, because I am half Indonesian. My ears are not pierced and I usually have a big smile on my face. I live with my mom and sister. My mom, Diane is a family lawyer and my dad, Agus is an interior designer. My sister, Sophie is 8 and in Grade 3 at P.N.P. I have been on many great holidays with my family, ^{I have been} including to: Durban, Joburg, (Australia) Australia and Indonesia.

I am not the biggest pet owner, but I do have a few. I have one dog, Pepe, one puppy, Molly and one tortoise, Esiotrot. My sister has one hamster, her name is Cheese. I am a very loyal friend, my friends can trust me no matter what. My mom says I am very considerate, she calls me the peacemaker of the house. Speaking of home, I live in 26 North Way, Pinelands. My house is a 3 bedroomed, 2 bathroomed, single story house. It has a large garden and our wall is painted blue. We have no swimming pool, even though we wish we did.

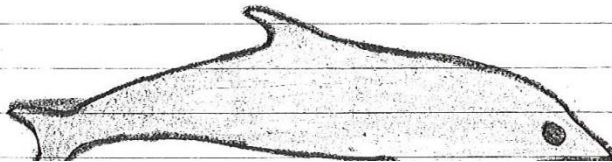
At school I do multisport, which is running and swimming. It keeps me fit and it's fun. I also do modern dance. At the Frank Joubert art school I do art. My dad is an artist, so he pass his talent on to me. I am quite unusual, because I actually like

The reason why I think dolphins behave like this is because they are very intelligent, and the act I liked the most was when the whale carried the people. ~~that act was fun.~~

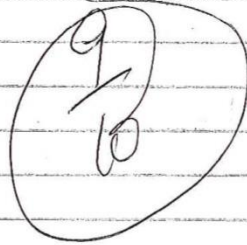
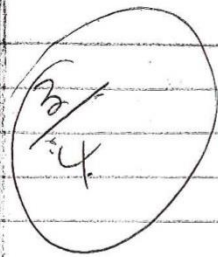
My feelings about dolphins in captivity are very normal, I think they are happy because they enjoy themselves. They also have to have some dolphins because they have to make shows. Man makes use of these talents by learning to swim. I feel very good about this.

I think it is not possible to re-introduce dolphins back into the wild because they would want to be back in that pool, however they can overcome it and get used to the sea again and maybe just get a friend to join them.

We ^{can} ~~could~~ preserve dolphins by not polluting the sea and when we go to the beach, we should not throw our papers and things around and just walk away that's how we can preserve dolphins.



Kusala Primary



Ny 22 No. 35^a
Gugulethu
7750
28 April 2016

Dear Khanyi ✓

Hello I am fine. Yes, I am enjoying myself here in the City of Gold. No, I can't just go to the cave and take gold, only the ratters can get in. No one ~~can't~~ is allowed to get in there you will be in trouble and go to jail for years. And even your christmas. Sorry I can't go there.

People in here they like swimming to much in the beach and pools. Even our weather is hot to much. I wish school's will not opened. And I love holidays.

Please write back soon.

Your best friend
Ruiny ✓

V. Crest.

Appendix III: Examples of Poor Extended Writing work

North Beach Primary

3/4

9/10

Ny 22 No. 35th
Gugulethu
7750
28 April 2010

Dear Khanyi ✓

Hello I am fine. Yes, I am enjoying myself here in the City of Gold. No, I can't just go to the cave and take gold, only the ratters can get in, ^{very good for} No one ~~can't~~ is allowed to get in there. you will be in trouble and go to jail for years. And even your christmas. Sorry I can't go there.

People in here they like swimming so much in the beach and pools. Even our weather is hot so much. I wish school's will not opened. And I love holidays.

Please write back soon.

Your best friend
Ruiny ✓

V. Coast.

Writing Activity
My June Holiday

My June Holiday was fun and eaching
because my friend and I was played
games and making funny jokes. I went
to fun test and watched the soccer on
gr Spin in Town. It is very full we went
to Century City it was my friend
Gyr birthday. I went to the test everyday
it was great there and it was great
day it was not rain. I enjoyed myself
Spelly with each other. This is my best June
holidays. This was best world oep in
P hole world. we i'm go with my sister
to pak. I sad Brazil team test we have
ten laighy and talking. But when was coled
sy to maslem school

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

1/10

Ny 15 No B
Gugulethu
7750



Dear Josephine.

How are you? I am. We hope you? Yes I
enjoying myself to visiting City of Gold. Yes
I bring him back to gold coins from the
mines. I enjoying to swimming the
beach. The weather very hot. This is the best
school holidays ever.
Yes I will write it back soon.

?

Appendix IV: Formative Assessment and Simon Brown Instrument

Introduction

The introduction of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002) saw a marked shift in the manner in which assessment had to be used. It considered assessment as means to enhance the learners' growth and development, to monitor their progress, to facilitate and promote learning, and to improve teaching.

It happened however that, while the promotion of formative assessment was touted, little consideration was given in equipping teachers with a formative assessment frame of reference which resulted in different interpretations and implementation of formative assessment in the classroom. It is against this backdrop that Simon Brown developed the instrument.

Description of the Instrument

Simon Brown (2005) designed a questionnaire that could serve both a formative function and as practical tool likely to provide teachers with a frame in their implementation of formative assessment. It offers strategies and techniques that teachers could discuss and implement and would assist teachers to reflect and comment on their own practice, and to consider how best they could use assessment formatively.

The instrument was handed out to teachers in order to provide responses that were to determine how they saw or used assessment formatively.

Analysis and Results of Teachers' Responses

Analysis of teachers' responses reveals the complex nature of formative assessment as they contain both strengths and weaknesses. These responses are analysed in terms of how teachers responded to the instrument questions in relation to their practices and the manner in which they provide feedback to learners rather than how they conduct formative assessment. Analysis will be done against the categories discussed in achievement of formative assessment above including shared responsibility and feedback.

North Beach Primary

Analysis of North Beach primary reveals a rather conflicting and or contradictory picture.

In the opinion section on self and peer-assessment (from questions 4 to 10 of the instrument), the teachers seem to have a good understanding of formative assessment practice in general, and shared responsibility and gave appropriate feedback in particular. They find it valuable to involve learners in the marking process and to share feedback responsibility with learners through self and peer-assessment which by implication help learners to take responsibility for their own learning. They also claim to guide learners and suggest better ways of improving achievement in their written feedback. However, the section that interprets their actual practice (from questions 1 to 3 of the instrument) in relation to marking of essays and providing feedback presents a different image.

Teachers' feedback on the marking of essays focuses more on language use and convention than on the development and organization of ideas. As a result, the teachers miss out on the opportunity to make constructive comments or to provide guidance as to how ideas in an

essay should be organized and developed. They fail to use the criteria to describe the gap between the intended outcomes and the learners' responses. As for language and convention, more evaluative than analytical feedback is used as the teachers, more often, do not correct the mistakes. They use a language devoid of meaning which learners may not understand or be interested in decoding. The language includes certain signs to indicate that a word has been left out or the word shouldn't have been written or placed there, underlining a word twice to highlight a spelling mistake, placing a small circle to indicate a missing punctuation, etc. Feedback would have been developmental if the teachers could either correct the mistake or involve the learners in self-editing.

Analysis of the manner in which teachers provide feedback in general reveals the complexity of formative assessment. Teacher 1 believes involving learners in correcting mistakes that a learner has made on the board. This is consistent with the concept of shared responsibility where learners are involved in the marking process and are given the opportunity to take ownership of their own learning as she shares feedback responsibility with them. Teacher 2, however, claims that "I would help the learner quietly and individually...." Though the child may come to know how to correct the mistake, the method does not involve the class in the marking process, denies a learning opportunity to other learners who could have needed more help to understand the item or activity. Furthermore, it excludes learners in taking ownership of their own learning since the teacher fails to share feedback responsibility with the class.

Two common sticking points between the two teachers in the manner in which they deal with feedback is their confusion between summative and formative assessment and in how feedback should be effectively dealt with.

When asked whether "they have time to provide written or spoken feedback which goes beyond just correcting the mistakes", teacher 1's answer runs as follows; "It's difficult due to increasing admin demands but that, I usually have a comment line at the end of each assessment. It is crucial to speak to the learners in the next lesson after having marked the assessment." And teacher 2 says the following; "Teachers do have time, depending on circumstances. If they don't it is because of the demanding curriculum the teachers have to get through." The answers indicate that; (1) feedback whether written or oral is not effectively or appropriately done. (2) The teachers did not understand the question as I believe the question meant whether they have time to provide feedback that encourages learners to focus attention on task rather than simply getting the answer correctly. (3) Their answers demonstrate their confusion between summative and formative assessment. Teacher 1's answer refers essentially to their oral and extended writing summative assessment where there is always a comment line.

Road Primary

Analysis of teachers' responses reveals some considerable consistency between the opinion (from questions 4 to 10 in the instrument) and the teachers' actual practice (from questions 1 to 3 in the instrument) sections.

In terms of shared responsibility teachers seem to involve learners in the assessment experience through essentially peer assessment and involvement in the assessment process. This implies an encouragement towards learners taking responsibility for their own learning.

Feedback presents a worrisome picture. Teachers tend to focus more on language and conventions to the detriment of development and organization of ideas. No constructive comment on how a topic can be developed and organized is given. Answers to questions 3.a

and 3.b. in the instrument demonstrate good practice from teacher 1 and lacks in teacher 2's knowledge to give appropriate feedback. Teacher 2's answers shows confusion as to how guidance should be given.

Zamuli Primary

The teacher's answers in the opinion and in his actual practice sections demonstrate once again the complexity of formative assessment. Some questions remained unanswered and the teacher seemed to have misunderstood some of the answered questions.

The teacher failed to mark the essay and no comment on this activity is provided. On feedback, the teacher seemed to have experienced some problems in understanding most of the questions. Those that he answered, he placed his emphasis more on language and convention than on any other aspect of the subject. He also seemed to lack understanding about the general nature of the questions. He, however, believes in involving learners in the assessment experience through peer-assessment.

Kusala Primary

It emerges that, the teacher from Kusala practises shared responsibility to some extent. He involves learners in the assessment experience and believes that self and peer-assessment have the potential for learners' development.

The teacher did not mark the essay and therefore no comment is made regarding the activity. As how to deal with mistakes when a child is working on the board, the teacher's answer which runs as follows; "I ask the other learner to identify the mistake and correct it" seems to demonstrate that the teacher does not consider the moment as an opportunity for learning. The child who made the mistake may not be the only one to experience that difficulty. AS much as the teacher involves other learners in the assessment experience, he must also use as a learning opportunity. Feedback remains an area for concern across the board.

Conclusion

Responses reveal that in general teachers from the same school and across different school environments have to a varying degree a scant understanding of the use of formative assessment that can be attributed to a number of factors. These may include; a lack of formal training in assessment, a lack of interest in reading assessment related resources, negligence, assessment burnout, lack of collaboration between teachers and school weak management. This is substantiated in information from teachers' interviews in which, for example, teachers complained about the amount of time they spend assessing, and that 75% of them are at pain to distinguish between formal and informal; and summative and formative assessment. Some teachers are not aware of the existence of assessment documents, etc.

Besides the North Beach teachers who attend the National Professional Teachers' Organization (NAPTOSA) workshops on assessment, others rely on workshops organized by the Department of Education, and which they claim, confuse them even further.

Their limited understanding of the use of assessment impedes their ability to give feedback and use marking with the potential to improve and encourage and/or foster learning.

Their marking of essay fails to provide feedback that can potentially entrench the learners' art of writing. Teachers place more emphasis on how learners make use of language and conventions rather than how they develop and organize ideas. This is also the case for

Zamuli and Kusala as revealed in the after marking follow up comments as they did not mark their essay.

Trends to general feedback seem to ignore constructive guidance and tend to focus on the correction of mistakes except for teacher 1 from Road whose response establishes to use feedback as a learning experience.

Feedback remains essentially evaluative and devoid of descriptive comments potentially to cause learners to improve.

Teachers use different but sometimes confusing approaches as demonstrated in the examples below.

Example (1); teachers 1 from North Beach and Road Primaries, and Kusala will include the rest of the class to correct the mistake that a learner has made on the board. Teacher 2 from North Beach will adopt an individual approach and will prefer to work with the learner quietly. Teacher 2 from Road Primary's response is confusing and runs as follows; "I will explain to the learner that the words spoken by a person must always be in inverted commas. I will revise types of sentences...", and finally Zamuli will explain direct and indirect speech.

Example (2); on correcting a punctuation mistake while reading aloud teachers would proceed as follows; teacher 1 from North will write comment on the rubric on how to improve (though the actual practice point to the contrary according to learners' books). Teacher 2 prefers to speak to the class in general. Teacher 1 from Road will demonstrate a reading lesson first and let the learner to imitate. Teacher 2 will revise the rules of punctuation and sentence construction and also the different types of sentences, the rule and usage of each punctuation sign, verbs, nouns and listening exercises. Zamuli did not provide an answer, and Kusala will go back to the known and the unknown.

The manner in which teachers mark essay and provide feedback is not consistent with their claim of improving learning and monitoring learners' progress as the main purposes for which they assess.

All but except Zamuli's and Kusala's teachers conduct self and peer-assessment and all believe that open questions foster critical thinking though their practices hardly make use of them.

It can be further established that, despite the presence of certain commonalities, there is either no agreed guiding framework or collaboration in assessment practices between teachers from the same schools.

Finally, the study has provided an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the instrument which sought to assist teachers to use assessment to promote and foster learning. It follows that the instrument contains some strengths and weaknesses. Strengths are contemplated in the opportunity it gave teachers to reflect on the use of assessment and to familiarise themselves with a number of strategies and the purposes for which assessment is used. Finally, the instrument has gathered information that can inform future research.

In terms of weaknesses, it appears as if the instrument did not take into account the teachers' need since it is difficult to find out whether the instrument met its intended outcome. It is even difficult to measure whether it added teachers' understanding of the use of formative assessment. Furthermore, the design of the instrument should have included sections that

provide teachers with guidance in the formative use of assessment which could have had a formative effect in the manner in which they mark and give feedback.

Appendix V: Teachers Interviews

North Beach Primary

Teacher 1

Q1: What is your highest educational qualification?

T: I finished the coursework for my Masters in Education. I haven't done the research so I am going to start all over again. I got my Honours in Education Management. **Where did you graduate?** **T:** My college diploma I graduated from Bellville College that was still the campus in Kuilsriver. I did my four year teacher Diploma there. After that I went to CPUT/Bellville campus where I did my Honours and the coursework for my Masters. **What are your majors?** **T:** I majored in Mathematics and English.

Q2: Could you tell me about your attitude towards your job at present?

T: I love the school that I'm at, it's a very progressive school, it's very forward thinking from the management right down even to the teacher aids. Everybody works hard. There are times when some work harder than others, but everybody gets a turn to do what it is that they have to do. The school is extremely busy in the sense that there is always something happening. There is always some activity that is being done even right up until the last day of school. We are kept very busy, every Friday we have meetings, we have staff development where we learn from one another, which was missing from my previous school. And also the fact that the school is situated in a more prominent area, it has more resources. It's not a struggle as it would be in my previous school. At my previous school, you would have one or two teachers carrying the load of everybody else, and for others, my job starts at 7: 45 to 14: 45 and I go home. **Is your teacher development only internal, external or both?** **T:** We go out for teacher development not to give teacher development, but the school sends out on NAPTOSA/ the PROGROS they pay for you to go if you decide you want to go on any of it. We are also encouraged to go to the WCED workshops. I think everybody here is on par with the curriculum and the needs and what needs to be done. Sometimes when you go to a workshop, you say oh gosh, I just wasted my afternoon. **When you did your teacher training, did you do any course dealing with assessment?** **T:** Well it was part of your teacher training, and I think in the early 90s, it wasn't actually per se that it was going to be separate whereas now, we are studying the NCS document as part of training at college. We didn't have a curriculum in the 90s that we studied whereas now they are doing the NCS and they have a particular curriculum that they are studying, and they are looking at assessment in that. **Did you do it?** **T:** No, I did it in 2003 when it first came out. **Have you ever been to an assessment workshop?** **T:** The last programme we were on was about assessment, myself and the assessment coordinator went to the PROGRO based on assessment. **Did you like the workshop?** **T:** Yes. It was about using alternative methods of assessment and that it is that people sometimes get side tracked because we need a mark on the report and in our mark book. So, our assessment is focused on producing a mark and we are so pressurised with that because we are teaching all these learning areas and we got all these assessments to get through, so sometimes we assess before we even teach. We sometimes joke about it in the staffroom, we say I'll teach that later, let me just assess now and get over done with because that's what people think. So the workshop was about what is the purpose of your assessment first and then you design your task based on why you want to assess. Do you want to diagnose something, do you want a mark, or what is it for? **Do you have a curriculum advisor?** **T:** I suppose there is one because each EMDC should have one. She deals directly with our assessment coordinator. Our assessment coordinator sets out our assessment policy. We are fortunate because we know exactly what it is that is required from us which is in line

with what is required from policy. Just to say that the CAPS document we worked on in the last workshop now which is the Maths PROGRO this weekend and they were told that, they had a look at some of the differences between the NCS document and the CAPS document. So, she downloaded it on Wednesday and Wednesday evening, the two of us were sitting at the art and music evening in the hall and we were looking at it and we say let's tick off this and let's tick off that so that as coordinators we can get our head around it so that we can workshop the teachers so that it is easier for them to cope with. **What would you say now about your attitude towards your job at present?** T: Oh! I would say that it stems a lot from the environment that I'm in because the school is busy and positive place. You can't be anything else, you'll feel out of place if you were negative towards your job, and you'll feel out of place if you didn't work hard and if you didn't hand in things on time because everybody else is doing it. It is easier to have a positive attitude and to want to achieve and to want to do it.

Q3: Are you aware of the Department's requirements for classroom assessment?

T: Yes, I work with the NCS document. So, all my teaching activities, my assessments activities are based on the requirements that they have. Pass requirements, all of that, levels, how many assessments they need. We don't particularly say we only going to do three or four. It's a minimum requirement. **Do you know how many policy documents are there?**

T: I know of them, but I can't tell off hand How many are they. I have an assessment file with the policy document in, so every time even last year we were supposed to change the requirements to 50% and in the last minute they say we're not changing it we are staying with the old way after we've sent out notification to the parents that this would be the new requirements. We are aware of the changes all the time, but I can't tell you how many are they. **Since you started teaching before the coming of OBE, would please draw a comparison in the way you used to assess then and the way you assess now with OBE.**

T: To me we use a variety of assessment now. You know exactly what the assessment standard is. What must the child know? So, when you are drawing up your questions, before even getting to the setting of the question, you know that this sum that the child must do, must show me that he can or can't use a number line. He can't add on. So, you're pretty sure of what it is that you have to put in the test. Now, we use various forms, prior to that we just used to do tests. With OBE also, people started throwing away the tests and they just handed out projects and parents were doing them. The results were that children were passing with As and when they wrote the one exam they failed. **What do you think is the purpose of assessment?** T: This would be for me to see if the child has mastered the outcome, and to see if I was successful in what I needed to do. It's a reflection for myself as well because I need to see... I can't go on with the next chapter if 50% did not get the previous one then I'm just adding on more things that they don't understand. To me, it's a reflection, do I go back or do I carry on, do I take a certain group that needs to be remediated in a certain area? Do I need to change the form of assessment, because sometimes if you change it they feel better or they have a better understanding.

Q4: Does your school have an assessment policy?

T: Yes. **Which one do you use; the school's or the department one?** T: We use them both.

Q5: Do you view assessment as an add on or as an integral part of your daily classroom activity?

T: It has to form part of classroom activities. I'll never forget with the first implementation of the NCS one of the curriculum advisors came just when the unions said no curriculum advisors in classrooms. I taught a lesson, she came to me and said, "where is your assessment activity"? I said; assessment! Isn't that for the end? She, "No, that's where people make the

mistakes”. “How are you going to prepare the next lesson if you haven’t assessed the children and the success of your lesson now”? Before you can go on, you have to have some form of assessment. It doesn’t have to be a formal assessment. The children need to be able to kind of give back to you so that you have an idea. Because that’s where your reflection comes in and that’s where you go on for your next lesson.

Q6: Which of the following educational objectives do you mainly assess? Please circle the number that mostly corresponds with your practice.

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Not very often
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Very Often

Remember	1	2	3	4
Understand	1	2	3	4
Apply	1	2	3	4
Analyze	1	2	3	4
Evaluate	1	2	3	4
Create	1	2	3	4

We have a policy at our school as far as classroom assessments are concerned; they are based on Bloom’s Taxonomy. It used to be a third of each section, but we saw that most children started with this over here, the higher order questions. So we reverted to what I’ve just given you. What we did now is that; we sent a copy of the Bloom’s Taxonomy home to parents so that when they ask questions, they are encouraged to use all of those things. We intend children to just give us information and we don’t ask why.

Q7: How much marking do you do?

T: We have to mark all our children books, always. So, what I do because I teach grade six, it’s easy for me to do peer marking. So, we’ll do corrections, we’ll do revision of a section and we’ll peer marking and I’ll mark what they have marked. Things like creative marking, spelling and those things, I mark myself and all assessment needs to be marked. **How often do you assess?** **T:** We have one assessment week, but your assessment is not limited to that time. When you’re teaching language, doing oral, doing reading, so that’s during class time then you assess already and you’ll do your test during assessment week. If they have a project to do, you need to tell them the hand in date or the due date is that assessment week. But usually we have continuous assessment throughout the term. So, we assess quite a lot. **Do you mark every bit of assessment that you do?** **T:** Yes, if it is for recording purposes or for diagnostic purposes. **How long does it take you to mark?** **T:** Very long. We try not to set more than one or two tests for a particular day but because we do subject teaching, so you will have your subject to mark. For the children’s sake we try to assess or mark one thing per day in that assessment week. But if you have a class of 35 that needs to read, it could possibly and you have one or two periods, it takes you two to three days to get through one assessment task because each one needs to present. The maths games where 35 children need to present a math game and talk about it, that took about three weeks to get through. Each child needs three to five minutes, they need to set up, they need to present. So, it takes quite a long time. So, you need to have that plan all the time. We integrate a lot otherwise the only thing you’ll be doing is just assessment.

Q8: Do you ever combine written and oral assessment?

T: Yes. **How do you do it?** **T:** They did something on circuit and they had to design a game and had to come and present it to the class. So, it was written and oral. They had to make and create something. I do the same with maths, with English where part of it is a written piece. In English now we did media, newspapers where they had to choose a newspaper article, they had to read, summarise and they had to come and present the summary.

Q9: Are you familiar with the concepts formative and summative assessment?

T: Yes, summative would be for marks like your formal assessment and your formative would be like your diagnostic purposes, your questioning in the classroom. I usually separate it this way; to form an opinion or an idea of what the child is capable of doing. If you've reached your goals you have set if the child has mastered the outcome.

Q10: If the department and the university are to run parallel assessment courses free of charge; would you like to attend the course? **T:** Yes, I would, depending on what it is that they are coming to tell me. **That's what I would like to know from you.** **T:** They first of all need to know more than I know about assessment. Secondly, how I can streamline assessment to make it easier and take up less teaching time for the formal assessment. I would also like to know about the systemic evaluation. They are expecting us in our classes to vary our assessment and also the levels to accommodate our inclusive children but when they do systemic evaluation, they don't do that, they have one test to evaluate all children. That's the problem I have for the systemic evaluation. **Where would you like to attend the course, the department or the university?** **T:** I think outside sources have more information although the curriculum advisors come from the school's levels a lot of the times, they aren't able to bring that information across. It's the one area that's been lacking with workshops.

Teacher 2

Q1: What is your highest educational qualification?

T: I got a Higher Diploma in Education and I majored in Sport and Psychology. **Did you do any course in assessment during your teacher training?** **T:** You know, the department has this small courses and these things and ... but it's not ... it's more like workshops than courses. I was in London when they did the training, but I did the workshop. **What training are you talking about that took place while you were in London?** **T:** The training on the new curriculum, which is OBE. **The workshop that you had, was it on assessment?** **T:** Yes. **Who did the workshop?** **T:** Some of the workshops were done by NAPTOSA. They call them PROGROS and I attended those workshops. They are sort of weekends courses workshops. **Did you attend only the NAPTOSA workshops?** **T:** No, I also attended some that were provided by the Department. **Did you enjoy the workshops by both the department and NAPTOSA?** **T:** I enjoyed the ones with NAPTOSA more than the Department. **Why is that?** **T:** I think the Guys from NAPTOSA knew what they were doing and more importantly it's about what you learn. When you come from there, you feel revived. New things that you can use in your teaching and in your assessment as well. They actually make the teachers work less by introducing these new methods as well. It makes it more exciting. Yes, we were revived, came back revived. With them you learn something and something new which is not the case with the Department. **Are you involved in teacher development?** **T:** Yes, I'm involved in teacher training in sport but not with assessment. **Q2: Could you tell me about your attitude towards your job at present?**

T: At present, that's difficult. My wife just had a baby last week. At this pointing time I'm very tired, but in terms of my job, my feelings which ... I'm becoming very despondent because teachers, especially myself, we are finding it very hard to keep up with Departmental structures and what they expect of teachers in terms of assessment. They ask us to do this and to do that, and we don't have the time. We don't find the time to actually teach. We actually now teaching to assess. In the past we used to love and enjoy teaching. I actually do not enjoy the teaching because it's basically, mainly assessment driven. My first, five years of teaching, I loved it, but when they put this new RNCS and standards, this must be required every term you need to have assessment most teachers especially myself, we didn't enjoy it. It's more admin work, more paper work and more marking. **If the admin work should be taken away, would you enjoy teaching again?** **T:** I would love it. **Can you speak about your London experience in terms of assessment?** **T:** When I was overseas we handed out two reports for the year. We teach for example a certain section, for example addition, and every single child has an assessment file for example. We don't mark or give them a mark, we actually say did they achieve the assessment standard or the outcome, and we signed it off; yes achieved on such or such a date, but two reports they do get marked. That's when we actually mark for marks, for exams which is actually good in a sense because it's less burden on teachers in terms of admin work and marking.

Q3: Are you aware of the Department's requirements for classroom assessment?

T: Yes, I am aware. **Would you speak about what you know?** **T:** One of the requirements is that you need to have an assessment or a report every single term. Number two, it's for every subject the requirements in terms of number of assessment. There have to be a certain number of assessment for every single learning area. But, our school we don't agree to give for example only one assessment for English, for example because that's not a true reflection on the child's overall performance because every child learns differently. For example let's say we give maximum three per subject. The other thing is the assessment criteria to pass. There are new criteria, but in a way teachers are still confused because they something now and next year it's going to change. The confusion part is, it's the changes every year or two, what they try to or want teachers to do. The confusion part is, as I said, the changes they are implementing in terms of assessment, it's continuous, it's not a set standard and it's making teachers frustrated. **Do you know how many Departmental policy documents are there for assessment?** **T:** I can't name them off by hand, but I am aware of the assessment policy. It is made aware to us. Our HoD, she actually prints copies of the assessment policy. Every single teacher in the school has to keep the document and policies in her/his own file.

Q4: Does your school have an assessment policy?

T: Yes, we do. We have an assessment policy and it's being, it has to be revised because of the new changes. **Which one do you use, the school's or the Department's one?** **T:** We using our school's assessment policy in conjunction with the Department's one. The last time it was reviewed was three years ago. Now it's going to be done again because of the changes. In our school when we assess we use the Bloom's Taxonomy. We use that when we set out our assessment or whether it's an essay or a project and we incorporate that in our teaching. At the beginning pupils found it hard to deal with that type of teaching or assessing. **Would mind if I have a look at it later on?** **T:** Sure, the best person to speak to is the Deputy principal or our HoD. The reason why we are using it is to lessen the burden on teachers. We're using the Department assessment policy, but at the same time, we're using our own. Yes, we're using the Department assessment policy, but at the same time we incorporate our own to make our life a bit easier.

Q5: Do you view assessment as an add on or as an integral part of your daily classroom activity?

T: No, it's very important. I believe that assessment is very important. As a teacher you need to know if everybody has attained those outcomes. So, assessment is very important. But there are different ways of assessing. You don't have to give them tests and mark, mark, mark... you can just be observing which is just as important. Assessment, I think it is very important but you can't assess every single week. You're doing something or a module over three weeks and you assess it after three weeks, once you've taught them that topic for example. The only thing I'm disagreeing is assessment on and on and on. **Would I be correct to conclude from what you've just said that assessment is an integral part of your classroom activity?** **T:** yes. **Would you explain how you integrate it?** **T:** The way I integrate assessment mmm because I teach sport let's just say essays, History and Geography, I first teach them the topic or the module whatever I'm teaching. The way I integrate it, there are different ways. We, at the school when we assess, we don't believe when we assess we don't give one form of assessment for example just tests. So, we give beside tests whatever they do in class, role play, projects, it could be observation as well. We try to incorporate different amounts or kinds of assessment because we actually are an integrated school. We integrate kids with different learning abilities. So, some pupils will learn, will be able to look, to listen, or memorise things very well. So, we cater for those kids. We use more hands on things, tasks, practical things we use to incorporate in our assessment and in our classes. Our time table also caters for the learners' need. For example, we still have practical classes like woodwork, we still have art. Some classes go to sport during the lessons. We incorporate because we believe that we need to form the child holistically. **How many Grade sixes are here?** **T:** two with seventy learners. **Since you started teaching before the introduction of OBE, would please compare the way you assessed before OBE and after the introduction of OBE?** **T:** I love OBE simply because it caters for every child's need. The way of OBE, the teaching of OBE. The old teaching does not help every single individual's need. It was just rote learning, and that's it. OBE is more interactive which helps the child, and so the child has a learning difficulty, the child does not understand, if he just talks, they need to see things, they need feel in order to understand. That's where OBE come in. It's just not about memory or knowledge. It's more hands on, and that's what I love about OBE. But, I personally feel that OBE should have been introduced a bit differently to what it was done immediately like that. I mean the OBE system they took from overseas but overseas it took them twenty years or more to get the system going, and they still changing at the moment. It took twenty years to get a good system going there and they gave it us within five years. **In Terms of assessment which system do you think fulfils the purpose of assessment?** **T:** I refer the OBE system but I just think the assessment policy and criteria need to be a bit different. **What do you mean by different?** **T:** I'm talking about the amount and the frequency of assessment. I think the system is working and it's great. I wish I had this system when I was at school we would have thrived even more because I wasn't a person that... I didn't like memorising without understanding. If would have learnt how to apply myself I would have done so much better. **What do you really think was wrong with the old of assessing?** **T:** The old way of assessing was mainly knowledge. We assess the knowledge. It only catered for people that have a good memory. The way the jobs are going now, we are finding out that children today they are learning no just to remember, but also to apply, which is very important. That's an important skill. Today in any job, you need to apply your knowledge. You need to have a skill in order to do something. It may not just be a good memory but if you get actually do it. They are looking for people that can do the job.

Q6: How much marking do you do?

T: Let's say out of five days of school, three or four days of the week I'm marking after school. **How long does it take you to mark?** **T:** Just one thing, for example creative writing, it takes me two days. **What do you use when you mark, grades or comments or something else?** **T:** When I mark there is a rubric that shows them where they lost their mark or where they should have improved and at the bottom of the bottom of the rubric I have for example a comment. So, I allow myself to give a comment and also on the rubric besides teacher comments there is also a pupil for them to review what they did. Most time it's a comment, I actually comment on there. **Do you think that marking is a burden for teachers?** **T:** Yes, I do. **In what way?** **T:** Just for example time spent on marking and it shouldn't just be about marking. Burden in terms of taking work home first of all, and so there's no quality time spent with family at home. Number to, it's taxing. Sometimes some teachers take marking home during holidays. Say in a way it can be a burden. What we're trying to do we're trying to integrate with our marking and assessment. For example if I'm doing orals, projects during essays I use the same thing for English for example. In the past we used to do theme work. It's difficult. One thing if you do the theme in English you have to do the same theme in History. The curriculum does allow us to work in themes, but we find it very hard. **What do you think is the purpose of classroom assessment?** **T:** To see if the learners have achieved the outcomes or the assessment standards that you set out or the goals that you set out for them to achieve but not just see, for teachers perhaps if they understand what you have taught, but also to give the pupils some sort of recognition that they can understand this and give them a more of a target to achieve. **What is the use of assessment after you have marked?** **T:** After I have marked, the results are basically for the pupils and their parents if you think about it goes in their report.

Q7: Which of the following educational objectives do you mainly assess? Please circle the number that mostly corresponds with your practice.

1 = Never

2 = Not very often

3 = Often

4 = Very Often

Remember	1	2	3	4
Understand	1	2	3	4
Apply	1	2	3	4
Analyze	1	2	3	4
Evaluate	1	2	3	4
Create	1	2	3	4

Q8: Do you combine written and oral assessment?

T: We do not do it as often, but we do combine. It totally depends, for example we do a newspaper, we analyse a newspaper. I teach them the different parts of the newspaper, we analyse the newspaper, how they write newspaper articles, at the same time we get them to present their article after they have written it. In one project I assess three; the reading, an oral and creative writing.

Q9: Are you familiar with the concepts formative and summative assessment?

T: Yes, I heard that a long time ago. They are basically reflected on your report. The summative is the overall mark where we have a system put up in place. I'm aware of it, we actually do it basically almost every term or every single day and that's what leading us to more work and more stress. I don't mind formative, but it's not done regularly or as often, but you need to have summative to assess the overall result of the child. It's important, but too many.

Q10: If the department and the university are to run parallel assessment courses free of charge; would you like to attend the course?

T: Yes, because all of us would like to lodge our complaints to think of new ways of implementing our assessment policy for example, to make the burden of assessing a bit lighter, for example. **Where would you prefer to attend the course?** **T:** It doesn't matter. I think if you go to university, it would be more of..., the mind set of people approaching the university they going to find that you should go there to learn. If you go to the department, people come with a different mind-set, they come with complaints and they will be negative. I think it would be better if you like to learn about this to go to a different place like UCT, but people still come with a different mind-set. **What would you expect from such a course?** **T:** Well... as I mentioned before, expectations, yes, may be there are new methods of assessment, number two; new ways to make our life easier in terms of assessment, like integrating it. New assessment for different leaning areas as well. Finding ways or easy ways to make our job a bit lighter.

Road Primary

Teacher 1

Q1: What is your highest educational qualification?

T: I only had a diploma in education, which was a three year full time study, and then I did my Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in Technology as a part time study over two years. **Where did you study?** **T:** I studied at UET teacher training college in Athlone, and I did my ACE via Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). **What are your majors?** **T:** I specialized in needle work. That is why I did my ACE in Technology because the old needle work and handwork was incorporated in the Technology field.

Q2 Could you tell me about your attitude towards your job at present?

T: I'm very demoralized because I earn so little money. However, teaching is my passion and I don't think there is any job that I would enjoy more than teaching. Yes I moan and groan the normal whatever, but I love doing what I am doing. **What do you love it so much for?** **T:** The amazing part is that I always wanted to become a teacher. It was my dream. In fact I had two; being a fashion designer or becoming a teacher. Initially when I went to study, I said I was going to do it for my parents because they wanted me to become a teacher. Then I was very anti-teaching thing because I hated the teaching practice session. But, once I started the profession of being in the teaching situation, it's totally different to the college set up and the practice teaching and I just started enjoying and feel that this is one of those things I was

meant to do. **Are you involved with teacher development?** T: When you talk about teacher development, are you talking about having workshops for teachers, training sessions and stuff? **The answer:** Yes. **T:** I used to years ago at the school I was at. Normally we will go to represent the school, and then we will come back and do whatever we learnt there with our colleagues. **How long ago are you talking about?** T: I'm talking about a lot of years ago. Ten to fifteen years ago. **You've never been involved in any teacher development programme after that whatsoever?** T: No.

Q3: Are you aware of the department's requirements for classroom assessment?

T: Yes, the little knowledge that I have sent via these circulars and stuff. **What do you specifically know about those requirements?** T: I don't like that part of teaching thing, I don't like that part of reading all that information and knowing that kind of things off by heart. I just want to teach and be active with the kids. I don't like other... **Do you have an assessment coordinator?** T: From the school? **Answer: From the school and/or from the department.** T: I am not aware of that. We have a curriculum advisor. I met her once the last term. I had her, and I taught a lesson for her and she advised that may be the system that I am using might have been more involved. Like, I gave her a rubric which is part of an assessment task but, she felt that it needed more input for the learner. I actually felt that, that was too much work. **Did she advise you on assessment specifically?** T: She only spoke about the rubric for that assessment task. **Have you been to an assessment workshop even in the past?** T: I have but, I forgot most of the things and it changes all the time. **When you did your teacher training, did you do any course on assessment?** T: No.

Q4: Does your school have an assessment policy?

T: I have never seen it. I'm new at the school, so I've never seen it. **When did you start at this school?** T: I started at this school the beginning of this year, 2010 and I still regard myself new because there are a lot of things that I don't know. **Did you ask your colleagues about it?** T: No. **I mean it's the end of the year already.** T: Yes, and I think if it was there, I would have seen it. I haven't seen anything in writing. We have like phase meetings, we discuss these things, we talk about assessment and stuff like that but, I feel very lost at this school where that is concerned. I just basically do my own things because I don't have a definite guideline. If there is a policy, it should be on paper and should be handed to the educators at the start or whenever and you should know that, that, that and that. And then you have a guideline to work in. At the moment I just think I'm doing my own thing. **Did you try to find out if they do have one?** T: No, I don't think so. **What document guides your classroom assessment then because I don't believe that you are working in a vacuum?** T: I use the blue books as my guide. The schedules, whatever they ... yeah I use that as a guide. Not that we can really gauge according to that because I think that; first my personal opinion is that the teacher sets the standard in the class and automatically because the standard when I came here is quite lower than what I was used to at the school where I come from Sea Point Primary. The standard there was very high. So we pitched our lessons and the content of our lessons at a fairly high standard. So, when I came here compared to those grade sixes and these grade sixes, the standard is very low. But, slowly and surely I'm trying to lift my standard to get them where I think they should be. Knowing the content but, their general knowledge in the grade sixes here is very weak. I work basically with what I have here, but I try to use the blue books as a guide.

Q5: Do you view assessment as an add on or as an integral part of your classroom activity?

T: It has to be an integral part because that is your baseline to move through your next concept. You need to assess what you have just done for the week and then move on to your next one that's why I..., personally in my class, for example for maths, I would do a test every Friday on the concept that I've worked on during the week. So, every Friday then I'll know right I can go to my new concept now or I need to spend a bit of more time on that concept. You know what I'm saying; revise or whatever. **Can you be a bit more specific as to how you integrate assessment in your classroom activities?**

T: If I work with maths, I do different types of tasks. I would do tutorials, tasks and I would also do investigation tasks where they basically work in a group or with a peer and they're working out like the one investigation task was when they did a Prophet in Loss where they were given a scenario and then they had to work information; was the prophet made, was it a loss and how to work out percentages based on a scenario. So, I used that as assessment tasks. It's things that they can relate to. So they are basically learning even though they are not even aware of it and I am assessing them as well. **Since you started teaching sixteen years ago, can you draw a comparison between the way you used to assess before and after the introduction of OBE?**

T: I definitely feel that the system in the olden days when I first started teaching was more like drilled and repetition and it was good for the child at the end of the day because they could remember but, the assessment then was basically test based. It was more of a regurgitation of information. Everything that I spoon-fed you, you must give it back to me when now it is more a situation with the OBE set up where the children need to use their critical thinking skills to reason, to use all those skills to actually be assessed at the end of the day. So, in that sense it makes things more practical, if I can say now than it was then. But also the fact that we had to learn parrot fashion those years and also made us remember our time tables, remember things more than now. Now you have to learn via playing, to make it a good happy experience, it not always that children can actually remember these things. So, you find it actually test them or assess them at the end of the day. **So, which way do you think is more efficient?**

T: I would actually say that there should be a combination of both because it's also good that you get the children to recite the times table for example. I'm focussing specifically on that because that is where all ... do the spelling test, spell out loud, use the five senses, write in the air, taste and smell, and all those things but yet also it's good that they use their critical thinking and to be to reason because sometimes you have to reason around, solve a problem. How kids are going to grow up and be part of reality if they cannot solve a problem? Those are skills that we, as teachers, need to teach these kids and not spoon-feed them all time, but it's difficult too. **What would you say is the purpose of assessment?**

T: To determine where you are, not you as a teacher, to reflect on whether the methodology that you are using is successful. If it's not then, actually you should go back and to find some other way to do some lesson, but it's also to find out what the kids have grasped, what concepts they grasped, and where they are. So, assessment is not only a tools used to assess the kids. I used as well to assess myself, to see whether I've reached my goal at the end of the day or my outcomes as they refer to it these days. **What do you use assessment for?**

T: For the report card. To report back to the parents. To show the parent that your child is progressing or no your child is not progressing. He/she is satisfying the requirements of the grade or not. You also need to report back to the principal, he reports back to the bigger department and whatever. **Where do you place assessment in your planning?**

T: I find that you do assess the child at the beginning of the lesson in the sense of the question and answer basis because by that verbal response that you get, you then determine where the child is. Even though it's an oral question and answer, it's a means of assessing. So, you do it in the start of the lesson. You can do it in a writing form, sometimes you can give a little test quick, quick, they chop and change and you get a response from them. You can do it, and I do it at

the end as well. **Is there anything that you find difficult when it comes to assessment** T: I find the class groups very difficult when it gets to assessment because at the moment I have 39 learners in the class if I take into the class that I had in Sea Point, 26 learners. 26 learners is more manageable than 39 learners. It is also one of the tools where you have to do group work and you have to do a role play and all those things. It's part of your assessment and to do things like when your class is filled with tables and learners, there is no space for them to be creative and for you to get them to do it. Your class size plays a major role for you do thorough assessment and really getting to know your kids. There are so many kids. They are so many of them having problems, and how do you divide your time so that these are my children, they are really struggling and I need to focus on them. I find that difficult to do. Yeah, working basically with groups. I don't feel that it's fair that those are the top learners in the class and you just give them work and give them work while you are working with slow learners. It's unfair because it means that being a better learner in your grade, you are now being punished to get more and more activity to do while the slower learner gets all teacher's attention. So, I find dividing my time and dividing myself to give assistance, I find it very difficult in assessment. **What do think should be done then?** T: I don't know but, I think part of the answer would be to reduce the class size.

Q6: Which of the following educational objectives do you mainly assess? Please circle the number that mostly corresponds with your practice.

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Not very often
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Very often

Remember	1	2	3	4
Understand	1	2	3	4
Apply	1	2	3	4
Analyze	1	2	3	4
Evaluate	1	2	3	4
Create	1	2	3	4

Q7: How much marking do you do?

T: Marking is my nightmare. That is my biggest nightmare. I try and mark mostly assessment tasks, and which means myself and I make use of a lot peer marking. If there are exercises that we're doing, I get them to exchange books and we do a quick test or stuff and normally they are quite honest, they mark fairly well and I reward good works. **Why is marking your nightmare?** T: 39 learners is not a joke marking all their work, and I mean if you want to give marking your all and it's alpha and omega of your assessment at the end the day, you need to be thorough and time, we are not physically given the time to sit and mark. At this specific school, you don't have admin periods which are sad actually. You work; when you get here you get in the class until the very last minute of the day. Then, you have that hour from 14:30 to 3:30 and you are supposed to mark but that time flies by so quickly and then we have staff meetings, phase meetings, and grade meetings and sometimes workshops that we have to attend during that time. So, where do I get the time to mark? So, it means that you have to take stuff with to go and mark at home which then takes up your family time which is

not fair at the end of the day. At the school where I come from, I had ten admin periods for the week. I mean, that was heaven, I could mark and only 26 kids in my class. So it could go quick. I would give a spelling test on a Friday, by the time I get the spell test back from them, I'm done marking my spelling and that was the big adjustment coming here. **How many days do you mark a week?** T: (Mr Macky those are tricky questions) As I say, It depends how my assessment is done, I basically mark most of my assessment and I do spot checks. For example maths I'll go around and I'll say I'll sign here, I'll sign there because I did spot checks there, and then tomorrow I'll do a different section of the class spot checks and stuff, and that is how I get to my marking. There are times when I have to mark and when it gets to recording assessment that I have an entire module, that is a nightmare and I have to mark like ten activities for each child and then I feel to go to the Doctor to have a sick leave.

Q8. Do you ever combine written and oral assessment?

T: I do in the sense that we will discuss a topic and we will write after. So, it's in that sense or sometimes I'll do an oral topic, I will assess that and the written topic will be something else. It depends on what the task is at the end of the day and that is basically for English. I don't do oral assessment for any other learning areas.

Q9: Are you familiar with the concepts formative and summative assessment?

T: Yes, I heard about it before. **Would you be able to explain them?** T: Not off in mind. I need to go and check my notes what formative and what summative is again. I think the one is the continuous assessment throughout the year and the other one is a test type of thing. I don't know which one is which. I think the formative would be the testing of ... setting off time tables and testing that time, and may be the summative the continuous one. It's something like that.

Q9: If the department and the university are to run parallel assessment courses free of charge;

- a) **Would you like to attend the course?** T: Yes, I think I would be interested depending on the time. Don't make it on a Saturday, and don't make it on a Friday.
- b) **What would you really expect from such a course?** T: There must be definite clear guidelines. They must say that this is what I expect for geography. I need a task that consists of this and that and that. You know, I like things that have structures. Give me structures. Don't say that you need to do a research project. I need to know that in the research project, you need to assess this and that and exactly what the research project must entail. I think at this stage assessment is a wide concept and people are not always clear about what is assessment to my colleague and what is assessment to me is two different things. **Where would prefer to attend that course; the department or the university?** T: It doesn't really matter where as long as it's central, it's easy for me to access. I don't want to go and hunt for the place. Attending a workshop is one thing but attending a workshop at the end of the day after you have been with 39 kids is also not... **No, this is a course, not a workshop.** T: No, then the university as long as I get the certificate, the paperwork and everything. You know that's important and I go a notch on my salary. **Why the university?** T: Because I think there is more status involved with the university.

Teacher2

Q1: What is your highest educational qualification?

T: I've got a three year teaching diploma, and I am currently doing my fourth year. **What are your majors?** **T:** English, Afrikaans and now I am doing Economic and management Sciences.

Q2: Could you tell me about your attitude towards your job at present?

I am frustrated at the moment. Teaching is a good profession but we have people who have no idea what they are doing. We do not get the support that we need to do our job properly. The curriculum changes almost every day but that information does not get to us. Assessment is a nightmare and we don't basically know whether we are doing the right thing. There is no one to give us proper direction or resources.

Q3: Are you aware of the department requirements on classroom assessment?

T: The department is always vague about assessment, and they find out to our colleagues who are dealing with assessment of the latest development in assessment. Sometimes you attend workshops held by the department, but it's also vague as to what should be done. Everybody comes with own idea which creates a lot of confusion, and that is a concern.

Q4. Does your school have an assessment policy?

T: Our school has an assessment policy, but I think they work according to what they receive from the department. **Does that mean that you don't use the school's assessment policy document?** **T:** No.

Q5: Do you view assessment as an add on or as an integral part of your daily classroom activity?

T: Looking at our class totals, it is very difficult to assess every single lesson with criteria, but there are certain assessment tasks that we give them in the various learning areas in the course of the week in our lesson plan. But for maths and English, we do a lot of assessment, but for others, it is basically assignments and some research.

Q6: Which of the following educational objectives do you mainly assess? Please circle the number that mostly corresponds with your practice?

1= never

2= not very often

3= often

4= very often

Remember	1	(2)	3	4
Understand	1	2	(3)	4
Apply	1	2	3	4
Analyse	1	(2)	3	4
Evaluate	(1)	2	3	4
Create	(1)	2	3	4

Q7: How much marking do you do?

T: I'm one of those teachers that like to mark whatever children do in class.

Sometimes I do the marking myself, especially maths and languages. But when it comes to other learning areas, I let them do self-assessment or peer- assessment where I redo the work with them on the board and they have to check the answers.

Q8: Do you ever combine written and oral assessment?

T: Yes, when we do drama. This is when they have to present something. They have to create their own dialogue and present it to you.

Q9: Are you familiar with the concepts formative and summative assessment?

T: No

Q10: If the department and the university are to run parallel assessment courses free of Charge;

a) Would you like to attend the course? **T:** Yes

b) Where would you prefer to attend it? **T:** the university.

Zamuli Primary

Q1: What is your highest educational qualification?

T: I've got a senior primary teacher's diploma. **What are your majors? T:** I majored in English. **Did you have any course dealing with assessment during your teacher training?**

T: During my teacher training, no but, I came to do it two years back. **Where did you do it?**

T: I did it at the Western Cape Teacher's College of Education but it was done by the Department of Education. **Can you speak a bit about it? T:** It was a good training. There

were some tasks that we were doing, how to teach the class, how to assess the learners.

Anything else you may think of? T: We were given tasks or exercises to complete and how to deal with slow learners like giving them extra work, and giving them work which is to their level of understanding. **What would you say about the implementation in the classroom of what you have been taught? T:** I think I know more about now than before,

and I am more confident about assessment now than before as well. **What about implementation? T:** Implementation is not always easy due to various circumstances in the classroom. **Can you give some examples of those circumstances? T:** Things like time,

number of learners in the classroom do allow teachers to assess learners as they should. **Why not? T:** Let's say time for example; I don't have admin time during which I can sit and mark.

I should always take marking home and I have 38 learners in my class.

Q2: Does your school have an assessment policy?

T: Yes. **Do you make use of it? T:** Not really. **Do you use the department one? T:** Yes.

Q3: Could you tell me about your attitude towards your job at present?

T: I can say that there's a lot of work that needs to be done and you know that nowadays, there are things that are hindering education. Some of those things are affecting us as educators and learners as well. I find teaching so interesting, but somehow, somewhere it's like you know...

What kinds of things are you talking about? T: Like recently, there was the public sector strike. It had a negative impact towards the learners and even to some of the educators. **The question is more about you as the individual teacher. T:** I'm ok and I love my job. **What do you love about it? T:** I love working with kids, yes, I love working with kids. It's so wonderful to work with them, and sometimes it needs a lot of preparation. So you

need to prepare before coming to school, so I love working with kids.

Q4: Are you aware of the department's requirements for classroom assessment?

T: Yes, I am aware because whenever they want to come here, they give us what they are looking for, then we have to prepare for ourselves for all those things that have been asked by them. **Can you name some of those things that they ask?** **T:** Things like evidence of assessment and so on. **Do you have an assessment coordinator?** **T:** Yes, we have committees at our school who have been looking at how learners should be assessed. We've got that committee here. **I'm talking about assessment coordinator from the department.** **T:** No. **Are you part of that assessment committee?** **T:** No, I'm part of other committees because we've been divided into committees. **In terms of assessment, do you know how many departmental policy documents are there?** **T:** Yes, because there are many forms of assessment where we assess the learners. Sometimes we use the rubric, sometime the group, sometime the educator himself. **The question relates to the official documents which spell out assessment requirements and guidelines. Do you perhaps know how many they are?** **T:** No, I don't know the number.

Q5: Do you view assessment as an add on or as an integral part of your daily classroom activity?

T: Yes, it is an integral part because every time I'm here in the class I'm assessing. I have to assess them even if it's not a formal one or it is an informal one. I have to do that all the time so that I can see the progress of the kid and achieve my outcome as well. **What you are saying is that; it is an integral part because you assess the learners all the time.** **T:** yes, I have to assess them all the time. **What do you think is the purpose of assessment?** **T:** I think the purpose of assessment is to see how the child is progressing and what can do because sometimes you can assess and sometimes you don't achieve your outcomes. So, you have to take other means in order to assess them or I think it's a good thing to assess the children. **What other means are you talking about?** **T:** Other means of assessment. **What do you use assessment for?** **T:** Because there is this continuous assessment, that is the CASS, sometimes we do take the marks from what they have written, we write them... there is a form for that part of assessment. Then we add up the examination, may be there is an examination which has been written, we add up to the continuous assessment, we add up to a hundred marks. **You said that you've been teaching for ten years, which means that you started teaching before the introduction of OBE. Is that right?** **T:** Yes. **Can you draw a comparison in term of assessment between the way in which you assessed OBE, and the way in which you assess now?** **T:** As much as OBE has been introduced because before we were assessing the children through tests, they were writing tests. Now with OBE, we have to give them some projects and all that stuff. So, it's more or less now the children as I can see they have become a bit lazy as compared then. So, they have become a bit lazy because now we have to take the project and all those stuff but, you don't see really what is in the child's mind. I can say that somewhere somehow the OBE is right and somewhere somehow the OBE spoils the children. **Can you elaborate this a bit?** **T:** They never gave their time because we have to do the projects and all those stuff. Sometimes learners take projects homes and they are done by the parents but back then we were doing everything in class. **As a grade six teacher, you know about the systemic assessment. Which one is more important to you, the systemic or the classroom assessment?** **T:** Both of them are very important. **Which one is more important?** **T:** The one in the class, but even the systemic evaluation is very important. The problem is that sometimes we do a lot of work as the educators as a result of that we lack that support from the parents because the child only focus on his work only here in the class but when he gets back at home, the parent doesn't even care, doesn't even look at the children's work whether he or she has done his/her homework or not. So, we need the full support of parents. **Why would you say the**

classroom assessment is more important than the systemic assessment? T: I spend more time here at school with them in my class. So, it's that ample time I am having with my children. **What do you find difficult in assessment?** T: As I mentioned, there are many forms of assessment. Sometimes we use this kind of assessment, it doesn't work and you get frustrated and you have to opt for another one and it doesn't work. So, you have to do the research all the time. **You spoke about continuous assessment; do you find it easy to assess learners continuously?** T: It's not easy when you are a subject teacher. When you are doing subject teaching. But, it is much easier when there is a class teaching whereby you sit with your learners the whole day. As a subject teacher, you take 40 minutes and after 40 minutes, you have to move to another class. So, you don't get to all the learners.

Q6: Which of the following educational objectives do you mainly assess? Please circle the number that mostly corresponds with your practice.

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Not very often
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Very often

Remember	1	2	3	4
Understand	1	2	3	4
Apply	1	2	3	4
Analyze	1	2	3	4
Evaluate	1	2	3	4
Create	1	2	3	4

Q7: How much marking do you do?

T: We do a lot of marking. I'm stuck even now with the marking. As you can see there is a lot and lot of marking. **How many hours do you spend on marking a day?** T: We do spend a lot of time because even after school we have to remain behind so that you can mark your work because sometimes you teach here in class, you don't even have time to sit down and mark unless you have got a free period, but now we don't have those free periods. **How many classes do you have?** T: I have all four grade sixes. It's a lot of work. **How many learners have you got in total?** T: More than a 140. **Do you mark every bit of assessment that you do?** T: Yes, I have to mark them because learners like knowing how they are doing. **How many times do you mark a week?** T: I don't know but I mark a lot. **When you mark, do you write comments or grades or codes?** T: I mainly write grades.

Q8: Do you ever combine oral and written assessment?

T: Yes, it must be reflected as the... even the people from the department because sometimes the other learners they struggle in writing, but if you do something orally then she can speak confidently.

Q9: Are you familiar with the concepts summative and formative assessment?

T: Yes, this formative is like when you are doing in class or the work that you are doing in class or whether you are taking any work in class that would be the formative. Summative is whereby you are writing a test, you're checking them whether they did understand the work

that they have done in class. So, you sum up all that work you gave them. **If there is anything that should be improved in terms of assessment, what do you think that could be?** T: When I was at school we were writing tests all the time, we have not been doing projects and all that stuff. I think the time then was right for us. **Do you do a lot of projects?** T: Not that much but we do them.

Q10: If the department and the university are to run parallel assessment courses free of charge;

- a) **Would you like to attend the course?** T: Yes, all the time. **And what would you expect from such a course?** T: I definitely expect people from the department. **In terms of expectation, what would want to learn from such a course?** T: I would love to learn some ideas coming from different people so that we can put them together and see how it will work in our classrooms. **Would you give an example of some ideas that you may expect?** T: Things like how you deal with learners that are different or coming from different races. How do you deal with them in terms of the language that you use in class?
- b) **Where would you prefer to attend that course, the department or the university?** T: Any place. **Let's say you are given a choice, where would you go?** T: I would take the one from the department. **Why the department?** T: You know, Those people, they felt the same thing we are feeling now. They were here, they in class, they were educators; they experienced what we are experiencing now.

Q11: Is there anything that I left out that you would like to mention?

T: I think I've said a lot, but what I can say now is that if we can work in hand with the department and the parents, we can make something good out of our learners.

Kuasala Primary

Q1: What is your highest educational qualification?

T: I've got a higher diploma in education and I studied at the Western Cape College of Education. **What did you major in?** T: I majored in English, Xhosa and Social Sciences. **Did you do any course dealing with assessment during your teacher training?** T: No. **Are you involved with teacher development?** T: Yes, I attend workshops and we used to do clustering as well even if it doesn't take place anymore, except for Xhosa. **Do you have an assessment coordinator?** T: There is not an assessment coordinator as such, but we have a curriculum advisor from the department. **Does he visit you regularly?** T: He visits for pre-progression towards the end of the year. **Have you ever attended any workshop on assessment?** T: Only here at school because we have an internal assessment programme here at school. **How many times did you have workshops?** T: a couple. **Do you think that workshop helped your understanding in assessment?** T: Yes, they did. Before our assessment was predominantly using one form of assessment like your test, but after the workshops, one was able to use different forms of assessment. Even with assessment tools, before we used to use memorandum, but after we could use different forms of assessment. **What different forms of assessments are you using now?** T: We use different ways of assessing learners now, such as peer assessment.

Q2: could you tell me about your attitude towards your job at present?

T: I am passionate about what I do. Obviously, there are challenges, but those challenges don't change my attitude towards teaching per se. There are times when one feels demotivated, especially when we don't get that much support. What happens is, we are just

required to just apply stuff while we do not get enough support like workshops, but because of who I'm dealing with (the learner), that becomes minor.

Q3: Are you aware of the department's requirements for classroom assessment?

T: Well, I would say I am aware because I know how many assessments are required per learning areas that I do, and I know what it is that I'm supposed to assess and how I'm supposed to assess that. **In terms of departmental policy documents, do you know how many are there?** **T:** I don't know how many they are. **Would you mind if I have a look at your school assessment policy?** **T:** I'll make you a copy.

Q4: Which of the following educational objectives do you mainly assess?

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Not very often
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Very often

Remember	1	2	3	4
Understand	1	2	3	4
Apply	1	2	3	4
Analyse	1	2	3	4
Evaluate	1	2	3	4
Create	1	2	3	4

Q5: Do you view assessment as an add on or as an integral part of your classroom activities?

T: Well it's a very important... It's important to have assessment. Actually I assess everyday whether formally or informally. So I view it as very important. **What would you say now, is it an integral part of your classroom activities?** **T:** yes and I assess during the lesson. **Can you comment on the way you used to assess before the introduction of OBE and the way you are assessing now?** **T:** I would say that then I got enough training. It wasn't done in one day. But with OBE, if we take our learners they don't really meet the requirements for assignment which at times feel that they are above board for these learners. I think that the older one was more effective. The idea behind OBE is good, so I would say that ideally this one is fine obviously there are similarities here and there. **What about you the teacher who is assessing, what do you think of the two systems?** **T:** Like I said, ideally the new one is better, but practically it's not. **Why would you say that?** **T:** Number one it requires learners to assess themselves. We try but they are not really that equipped because they need to learn that from the lower grades how to be constructive in terms of assessing themselves. This one also means that the parents should be part of it, but it doesn't really happen. May be it's the area I'm in, but I'm not really sure. The parents here are not involved with their children's learning.

Q6: How much marking do you do?

T: I do marking almost every day because they write almost every day. Whenever they are done writing, I do marking even if it's notes. I've got to check if they are able to copy what is written on the board the way it is. **How long does it take you to mark?** **T:** I take twenty to thirty minutes in class, but I do most of the marking after school. Sometimes they do marking themselves with me facilitating. It takes me two hours a day. **This is every day?** **T:** Yes, because I mark at home as well. **Do you have to mark every bit of work that they do?** **T:** I think it's important that we do because learners would like to know how they are doing. **Do you have time to do that every day?** **T:** I do my best even if not all of them, but I try to mark their work.

Q7: Do you ever combine written and oral assessment?

T: Yes, I do. **How do you that?** **T:** Let's say learners are doing a dialogue, they write it down, and after that they are going to present it without looking at what they have written down.

Q8: Are you familiar with the concepts formative and summative assessment?

T: Yes, I am. **Would you speak about them?** **T:** In my understanding, formative assessments are your formal assessments and summative are a collection of those assessments that you did for a quarter for progress report purposes. If I got three formative or formal assessments, out of a 100 a learner must get 80% or 1% which is a combination of those assessments.

Q9: If the department and the university are to run parallel assessment courses free of charge;

- a) **Would like to attend the course?** **T:** Anything which is there for development.
- b) **Where would you like to attend it?** **T:** A course is a course and it doesn't really matter where it is done. But I think I would go to university. **Why university?** **T:** I've been to college before, so I'd like a change.
- c) **What would you expect from such a course?** **T:** The theoretical part of assessment and its application. **What do you mean by application?** **T:** Beside the knowledge I would have gathered, how I would implement that in the school environment.

Q10: Is there anything that I left out that you would like to mention?

T: Not really.

Appendix VI: Letters

MakengoNdungu
Teacher at Chapel Street School
Cellphone no: 073 489 5251
Email: mackynd@yahoo.com/ndnmak001@uct.ac.za

Date: 2010-06-23

Permission to conduct research at four primary schools.

Dear Dr Cornellisen,

I hereby request permission to conduct research which will involve three primary schools and six teachers in the WCED towards the requirements for a MED degree in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town.

The research aims to obtain important information regarding Grade 6 English home language teachers' assessment practices. Specifically, it seeks to find out about the intention, the nature and the manner in which teachers conduct, describe and use assessment in the classroom.

The findings of the research will provide useful information into current assessment practices for curriculum developers, assessment advisors and teachers. The research will consist of the following;

- a) a semi-structured interview;
- b) a questionnaire on formative assessment which teachers will be requested to answer;
- c) and a collection and analysis of all written and any evidence of oral classroom assessment in English home language. (please find attached the draft questions of the interview and the questionnaire on formative assessment)

I would very much appreciate it if you would grant me permission to carry out the above proposed research in the schools. I would particularly appreciate it if you could inform me by the time schools open on July 12th as I would like to contact the schools and the teachers in order to start collecting information. Should you require clarification on any matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, A/Prof Rob Sieborger (Rob.Sieborger@uct.ac.za; 021 650 3370).

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

MakengoNdungu

MakengoNdungu
Teacher at Chapel Street School
Cellphone no: 073 489 5251
Email: mackynd@yahoo.com/ndnmak001@uct.ac.za

Date: 2010-06-23

Permission to conduct research at your school.

Dear Principal,

I hereby request permission to conduct research at your school as part of the requirements for a MED degree in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town.

The research aims to obtain important information regarding Grade 6 English home language teachers' assessment practices. Specifically, it seeks to find out about the intention, the nature and the manner in which teachers conduct, describe and use assessment in the classroom.

The findings of the research will provide useful information into current assessment practices for curriculum developers, assessment advisors and teachers. The research will consist of the following;

- a) a semi-structured interview;
- b) a questionnaire on formative assessment which teachers will be requested to answer;
- c) and a collection and analysis of all written and any evidence of oral classroom assessment in English home language. (please find attached the draft questions of the interview and the questionnaire on formative assessment)

I would very much appreciate it if you would grant me permission to carry out the above proposed research in your school. I would particularly appreciate it if you could inform me within three days as I would like to contact the teachers in order to start collecting information. Should you require clarification on any matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, A/Prof Rob Sieborger (Rob.Sieborger@uct.ac.za; 021 650 3370). Please, find enclosed the department's letter granting permission to use the schools for the purpose of this research.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

MakengoNdungu

MakengoNdungu
Cellphone no: 073 489 5251
Email: mackynd@yahoo.com/ndnmak001@uct.ac.za

**Request for permission to use your child's assessment scripts in a research project on
classroom assessment**

Dear parent,

I am carrying out a research project on classroom assessment as part of the requirements towards the fulfilment of a Master's of Education Degree in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town. I therefore humbly request your permission to use your child's assessment script in this research.

The research aims to obtain important information regarding Grade Six English Home Language teachers' assessment practices. Specifically, it seeks to find out about the intention, the nature and the manner in which teachers conduct, describe and use assessment in the classroom as well as the demands that are placed on teachers in terms of classroom assessment, and the analysis of the learners' assessment scripts is critically vital to gather such information.

The findings of the research will provide useful information into current assessment practices for curriculum developers, assessment advisors and teachers.

I would very much appreciate it if you would grant me permission to access your child's assessment script for the purpose of this research. I would specifically appreciate it if you would inform me within two days as I would like to start working as soon as possible. Should you require clarification on any matter, please, do not hesitate to contact me, the child's school or my supervisor, A/Professor Rob Sieborger (Rob.Sieborger@uct.ac.za; 021 650 3370). Please use the consent slip below for your decision.

Thank you for your cooperation

Yours Sincerely,
MakengoNdungu

CONSENT SLIP/TO BE RETURNED TO SCHOOL

Name of the learner: _____

Name of the parent: _____

Please tick where appropriate:

Permission granted: ☐ Permission refused: ☐

Navrae
Enquiries **Dr A.T Wyngaard**
IMibuzo
Telefoon **021 467 9272**
Telephone
IFoni
Faks **(021) 425-7445**
Fax
IFeksi

Verwysing **20100707-0031**
Reference
ISalathiso

Mr MakengoNdungu
17 Alice Springs
Alice Street
Goodwood
7460

Dear Mr MakengoNdungu

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: A DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH: GRADE 6 TEACHERS IN FOUR CAPE TOWN SCHOOLS.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **01 July 2010 till 30 September 2010.**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Audrey T Wyngaard
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**
DATE: 07 July 2010

